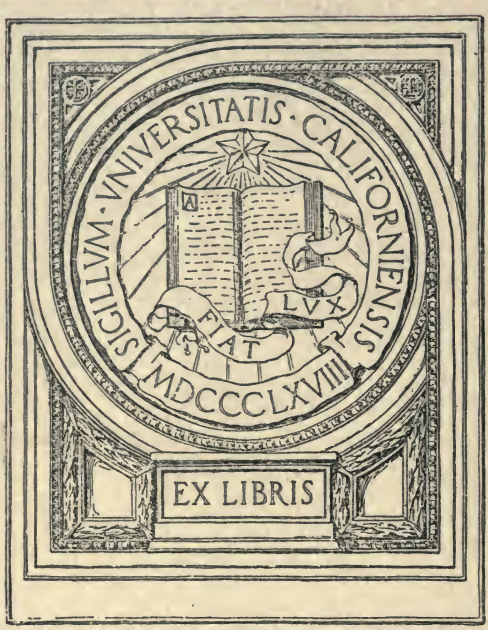
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WORK WHILE YE HAVE THE LIGHT

BY

LYOF TOLSTOI

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

BY

E. J. DILLON, Ph.D.

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1891

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NOTE TO THE REVISED EDITION.

SINCE this work was originally published, it has been pointed out to the editor by Dr. W. Robertson Smith that the MS. which Julius reads on his sick bed, and which makes him resolve for the second time to be a Christian, is that of the first five chapters of the διδαχὴ τῶν ἀποστόλων—*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*—that very curious early Christian work whose discovery by Bryennius at Constantinople created so great a sensation a few years ago. As these chapters are literally rendered with some trifling omissions, it seemed proper to compare our story with the Greek text, and Dr. Robertson Smith has been so kind as to do this. This has led to the making of a considerable number of alterations in the translation. For example, at p. 139, l. 9, the word originally given as "sermon" is now altered to "precept" (ἐντολή).

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It has been necessary to make these changes with great caution, and they are offered with all reserve. This book exists under very peculiar conditions. The present translation is the only printed text, since the book has never appeared in Russian or in any other language. But we consider that we are doing no wrong in availing ourselves of the learned and judicious help of so distinguished a scholar and theologian as the friend to whom we owe these corrections.

E. G.

INTRODUCTION.

IT has been the misfortune of Count Tolstoi to become widely known in the West of Europe at the very moment when he was performing a complete change of dress. The legitimate enthusiasm which his works of the imagination might awaken has been confused with the perhaps equally legitimate, but certainly much more obvious and vulgar surprise at the amazing character of his new social and religious views. If the alteration had taken place sooner or later, it would have been pleasanter for us and juster to him. If he had always written in a language which we could understand, we should long ago have comprehended the nature of his literary genius, and should have been less startled by his moral transformation; if the presentation to Europe had been delayed, we should have taken his work as a whole. But in point of fact, we were constantly being assured

that behind the dyed curtains of that Scythian tent there sat a mysterious chieftain, arrayed in all the splendours of the Orient. We tear the veil aside at last, and discover a gentleman *in puris naturalibus,* selecting a new set of garments. It is true that this disturbing circumstance has enormously added to the fame and success of the Russian writer, and that a hundred persons are found to discuss his nakedness to one who cares to think of what he was when he was clothed. But this is little consolation to the student of pure literature, who feels inclined to drive out the social group, and to guard Count Tolstoi's doors till he has wrapped himself once more in raiment, whether civilised or savage.

Of the moral speculations of the great Russian novelist nothing shall here be said. Most of what has passed for recent criticism has occupied itself with a vain and capricious agitation of Tolstoi's views on marriage, on education, on non-resistance to authority, to the exclusion of all other considerations. It would be absurd to deny that some of these theories irresistibly invite discussion, or that the distinguished gravity of the author is not justly fascinating

to an age which has been exhausted and lacerated by the funniness of its funny men. But it is difficult not to see, also, that speculation of this kind has been pursued in one form or another by every generation, that it has never yet succeeded in solving the riddle of this painful earth, and that in contrast to its evasiveness and intangibility, the positive consideration of literature as literature has a great charm. In these few words, then, Tolstoi will not be treated as the prophet or saviour of society, but as the writer of novels. For this extremely unpopular mode of regarding him, a critic's best excuse is to recall those touching and noble words written by Tourgenieff in his last hours to his great successor :—

"Dearest Lyof Nikolaievitch, it is long since I wrote to you. I have been in bed, and it is my death-bed. I cannot get well ; that is no longer to be thought of. I write to you expressly to tell you how happy I have been to be your contemporary, and to present to you a last, a most urgent request. Dear friend, come back to literary work ! This gift came to you whence all gifts come to us. Ah ! how happy

I should be if I could think that you would listen to my request. My friend, great writer of our land of Russia, grant me this request."

The author of *Anna Karenine* has granted it in some degree, but how rarely, how fitfully, with how little of the artist's fire and consecration! Let us hope that in a near future he will give us of the things of the spirit in less niggardly a fashion. Let him remember that at the present moment there is no man living from whom a sane and complete work of fiction, on a large scale, would be more universally welcomed.

I.

The life of the Russian novelist has often been narrated, but presents no features of very remarkable interest. Count Lyof Nikolaievitch Tolstoi was born on August 28 (O.S.), 1828, at Yasnaya Polyana, an estate on the road to Orel, a few miles out of Tula, in the centre of Russia. This place and its surroundings were described in a very charming paper contributed by Mr. Kennen to *The Century Magazine* for June 1887. Yasnaya Polyana has been the alpha and

omega of Tolstoi's life, all absences from it being of the nature of episodes. He has made it his sole residence for the last thirty years, and it is the scene of his much talked-of social experiments.

We were long under the impression that Tourgenieff and Tolstoi were isolated apparitions on a bare stage. But as familiarity with Russian fiction increases in the West, we see the same structural growths proceeding in Russia as in the other countries of the world. The novel there, in its modern form, began to exist about 1840, and Gogol, whose *Dead Souls* appeared in 1842, was its creator. The "Men of the Forties," as they are called, arose from the shadow of Gogol, and were young men when his book made its first profound sensation. The birth dates of Gontcharoff, 1813, Tourgenieff, 1818, Pisemsky, 1820, and Dostoieffsky, 1821, explain why these four illustrious novelists were roused and fired by the publication of *Dead Souls*. It came to them, with its realism, its deep popular sympathy, and its strange humour, as a revelation at the very moment when the brain of a young man of genius is most incan-

descent. But Tolstoi, younger by seven years than the youngest of these, did not arrive at intellectual maturity till after the first ardour of the new life had passed away. Russia, in its rapid awakening, was a different place in 1850 from what it had been in 1840, and to understand Tolstoi aright we must distinguish him from the Men of the Forties.

In endeavouring to form an idea of the literary influences which moulded his mind, we are likely to be more perplexed than aided by the strange book called *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth*, which bears a striking relation to the recently published autobiography of the infancy and adolescence of Pierre Loti. In each book the portrait is so different from what, one is convinced, any other person, however observant and analytical, would have made of the child in question, that one is dubious how far the tale should be looked upon as a charming and unconscious fiction. In Tolstoi the little anecdote of the imaginary dream, the incidents of which by being repeated, grew to seem absolutely true, and moved the inventor to tears of self-pity, though given as a sign of scrupulous verity

in autobiography, points to a tendency which is very natural and in a novelist very fortunate. But a strange fact is that these semi-mythical, intensely personal and curiously minute notes of the mind of a child were not made late in life, when the memory often recurs to the remotest past, but at the starting-point of the writer's career. Before he had started he stopped to look back, and he began in literature where most old men leave off. The *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth* was commenced as early as 1851, before Tolstoi opened his brief adventure as a soldier. This book appears to be one of its author's favourites; he was long caressing it before it first appeared, and he has entirely remoulded it once, if not twice. It is excessively ingenious, and one notes with interest that the first book which attracted the future agriculturist's attention was a treatise on the growing of cabbages. The analysis of the feelings of a nervous child was seldom carried out in a more masterly fashion. But the book is often dull, which the author's later work can hardly be accused of being.

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II.

It was Caucasia, that *Wunderland* of Russian sentiment and romance, which first awakened the imagination of Tolstoi. The Vicomte de Vogüé, in his delightful chapter on the idealism of Russia, has shown us what a Byronic fascination was exercised by the moonlit gorges of the Caucasus on the poets of seventy years ago. It was to a province steeped in romantic melancholy, penetrated by reminiscences of Pouchkine and Lermantof, that Tolstoi, a spirit of a very different order, travelled in 1851. Suddenly captured by the genius of the place, he enlisted in the army, and became an officer of artillery in a mountain fortress over the Terek. Here he began to be an author, though he published none of his Caucasian studies till he had left the Caucasus, on the breaking out of the Turkish war, in 1853. The contrast between the Asiatic and himself is the first problem which moves him in the world of fiction. Now it is illustrated by Olenine, the victim of ennui, who flings himself into the friendship of the savage Orientals; now by Jiline, who, unwillingly and after a gallant

struggle, is captured and made to live among them, but ultimately casts his chains aside; now by the gross and comfort-loving Kosteline, who pines away in the Tartar camp, and dies. In each case, though not always so romantically as in *The Cossacks*, what interests the novelist is the difference of race and instinct, rendering the inner meaning of those outward trappings whose barbaric picturesqueness tempts him to loiter on its details. Tolstoi left the Caucasus a skilful writer, expert in the conduct of a narrative, but still tinged with the blue mist of romanticism.

But he had hardly started on the three years' laborious campaign in which he was to learn so much of life, than there was published at home a book which revealed to Russian readers a new genius. *Polikouchka* was issued in 1854, the year after *The Cossacks* appeared, and if it achieved a less popular success, it deserved closer attention. It may be that Tolstoi, who has filled wider canvasses, has never painted a genre-picture more thoroughly characteristic of himself than this study of manners on a large Russian estate. *Polikouchka* is the story of a

serf, who practises as a veterinary surgeon, but who is really a quack and a thief, through weakness and drink, since he is not essentially a bad fellow. His mistress, the Barina, a sentimentalist, pities him, and believes that if he went through an ordeal, on his honour, it might be the saving of him. Accordingly she sends him to a neighbouring town to fetch a large sum of money. Every one, even the man's wife, believes that he will either steal it or squander it on drink. However, he starts, gets the money, returns faithfully, and just before reaching home loses it. Unable to face the shame of this discovery, he hangs himself, and the money is found, all safe, directly afterwards.

We may take *Polikouchka* as typical of Tolstoi's work at this time. We first notice that, although the book is short and episodical, the author has lavished upon us an astounding number of types, all sharply defined. The recruiting scene in the Mir directly points to the skill with which the vast spaces of *War and Peace* were presently to be made to swarm with human life. Then the power of sustained analysis of the complex phenomena of character,

in its stranger forms, is now seen to be completely developed. The mixture of vanity, cupidity, honour and stupidity which riots in the brain of Polikouchka as he drives off to fetch the money is described with a masterly effect, and in a manner peculiar to Tolstoi. Nor is this story less typical of its author in its general construction than in its specific features. In later years, indeed, Tolstoi rarely opens a tale with the sprightly gaiety of *Polikouchka,* yet he has preserved the habit—he preserves it even in the *Kreutzer Sonata*—of beginning his stories with a scene of an amusing nature. In *Polikouchka* the tragical, the mystical element is delayed longer than has since been the author's wont, but it comes. The ghost of the suicide fingering about for the money in Doutlov's house on the fatal night is the signal for the conventionality of the tale, as a piece of literature, to break up, and this book, which began so gaily and with its feet so firmly planted on common life, closes in a scene of wild and scarcely intelligible saturnalia.

Unless I am mistaken, and no exact bibliography of Tolstoi's writings seems to be at hand

—the story which we call *Katia* (and the Russians *Conjugal Happiness*) was written while the novelist was still fighting the Turks. The extraordinary volume named *Sketches from Sevastopol* certainly belongs to this period. Totally distinct as these are—the one being a study of peaceful upper-class life on a Russian estate, the other reflecting the agitation and bewilderment of active war—they show an advance in intellectual power which takes much the same direction in either case. Tolstoi is now seen to be a clairvoyant of unexampled adroitness. If "adroit" be thought an adjective incompatible with clairvoyance, it has at least not been used here without due consideration. The peculiar quality of Tolstoi's imagination seems to require this combined attribution of the intentional and the accidental. His most amazing feats in analysis are henceforth not strictly experimental, but conjectural. The feelings of Mikhaïlov when the bomb burst, and he was wounded, may have been experienced; those of Praskouchine, who was killed, can but have been created. Few readers have not been forced to acknowledge the amazing power of the

passage last alluded to. But to call it realism, in the ordinary sense, is to rob it of half its value as a singularly lofty exercise of the imagination. Yet it is precisely in this aptitude for conjectural analysis that the occasion is presented for ambition to o'ervault itself. It is the mind that sees the non-experienced quite as clearly as the experienced, which is most liable to lose consciousness of the difference between reality and unreality. The spirit that "walks upon the winds with lightness" may step into the cloud of mysticism without having noticed its presence.

III.

The year 1858 was a great period of awakening in Russian fiction. It saw the publication of Gontcharoff's masterpiece, *Oblomof;* Pisemsky then rose to a height he was never to touch again in his great realistic novel, *A Thousand Souls;* Tourganieff produced his exquisite *Assja,* and prepared the distinguished and pathetic surprise of his *Nest of Nobles.* Dostoieffsky, still away in Siberia, was putting together his notes for the *The House of the Dead.* Tolstoi, plunged for the moment in the fashion-

able life of St. Petersburg and Moscow, could not be ignorant of this sudden revival of letters, nor unmoved by it. Hitherto he had been content to obtain striking effects within restricted limits. If his short stories had not always closed with artistic regularity, it was that he felt the true observer's disinclination to draw the strings together artificially. But he could be contented with small spaces no longer. His mind was now set on the production of works whose proportions should be properly related to the vast and complex mass of figures which was ever moving in procession behind his eyelids.

His next important publication, *Three Deaths*, which came out in 1859, resembles a bundle of studies by a great artist who contemplates a gigantic composition. The opening description of the sick lady in her carriage, travelling in an atmosphere of eau-de-Cologne and dust, with its undemonstrative inventory of telling details, and its extreme sincerity of observation, is exactly like a page, like any page, from the two great novels which were to succeed it. But the volume is not without faults; of three selected

deaths, two should scarcely have been taken from the same class of the same sex. The final picture of the conscience-smitten coachman chopping a cross is not without a certain vagueness. We hurry on, since a book awaits us which drowns *Three Deaths* as a star is drowned in the sunrise.

Tolstoi was thirty-two when he published his first great novel, *War and Peace*, in 1860. Very soon after its appearance, he took himself out of society, and began his retirement at Yasnaya Polyana. For fifteen years the world heard comparatively little of him, and then he crowned the edifice of his reputation with the successive volumes of *Anna Karenine* (1875–77). It is by these two epics of prose fiction, these massive productions, that he is mainly known. By degrees the fame of these amazing books passed beyond the ring of the Russian language, and now most educated persons in the West of Europe have read them. They dwarf all other novels by comparison. The immense area of place and time which they occupy is unexampled, and the first thing which strikes us on laying them down is their comprehensive character.

The work of no other novelist is so populous as that of Tolstoi. His books seem to include the entire existence of generations. In *War and Peace* we live with the characters through nearly a quarter of a century. They are young when we are introduced to them; we accompany them through a hundred vicissitudes of disease and health, ill fortune and good, to death or to old age. There is no other novelist, whose name I can recall, who gives anything like this sense of presenting all that moves beneath the cope of heaven. Even Stendhal is dwarfed by Tolstoi, on his own ground; and the Russian novelist joins to this anthill of the soldier and the courtier, those other worlds of Richardson, of Balzac, of Thackeray. Through each of Tolstoi's two macrocosms, thronged with highly vitalised personages, walks one man more tenderly described and vividly presented than any of the others, the figure in whom the passions of the author himself are enshrined, Pierre Bezouchof in the one case, Levine in the other. This sort of hero, to whose glorification, however, the author makes no heroic concessions, serves to give a certain solidity and continuity to the massive narration.

These two books are so widely known, that in so slight a sketch as this, their constitution may be taken as appreciated. Their magnificent fulness of life in movement, their sumptuous passages of description, their poignancy in pathos and rapidity in action, their unwavering devotion to veracity of impression, without squalor or emphasis, these qualities have given intellectual enjoyment of the highest kind to thousands of English readers. They are panoramas rather than pictures, yet finished so finely and balanced so harmoniously that we forget the immense scale upon which they are presented, in our unflagging delight in the variety and vivacity of the scene. No novelist is less the slave of a peculiarity in one of his characters than Tolstoi. He loves to take an undeveloped being, such as André in *War and Peace*, or Kitty Cherbatzky in *Anna Karenine*, and to blow upon it with all the winds of heaven, patiently noting its revulsions and advances, its inconsistencies and transitions, until the whole metamorphosis of its moral nature is complete. There is no greater proof of the extraordinary genius of Count Tolstoi than this,

that through the vast evolution of his plots, his characters, though ever developing and changing, always retain their distinct individuality. The hard metal of reflected life runs ductile through the hands of this giant of the imagination.

IV.

In 1877 *Anna Karenine* was finished, and the applause with which it was greeted rang from one end of Russia to the other. But the author remained in unbroken seclusion at Yasnaya Polyana. He began to write another romance on the same colossal scale, this time taking up the history of Central Europe at a point somewhat subsequent to the close of *War and Peace.* Before he had written many chapters, that crisis, that social and religious conversion ensued, which has tinctured his life and work ever since. He threw his novel aside, and, at first, he was swallowed up in didactic activity, composing those volumes on religion, education, and sociology which have created so great a stir. But he has to some slight degree, perhaps in answer to Tourgenieff's dying prayer, returned to the exercise of his talent, and has added new

stories, most of them short, and most of them eccentric or mystical, to his repertory. He has composed very simple tales for children and peasants, and some of these are of a thrilling naïveté. He has written, for older readers, *A Poor Devil* and *The Death of Ivan Iliitch.*

To readers who desire a direct introduction to the work of Count Tolstoi no better volume can be recommended than that latest mentioned. It is an unsurpassed example of his naturalism, with its instinctive and yet imaginative interpretation of the most secret sentiments of the soul. It is piteously human ; nay, the outcome of it all, pushed to its logical conclusion, is of a kind to break the very heart. Yet it is scarcely morbid, because wholesomely observed ; nor cynical, because interpenetrated with pity and love. Ivan Iliitch is a successful lawyer, rising to a brilliant and commanding position in the world, who sickens of an obscure internal complaint, and slowly dies. His instincts, his thoughts, are followed and evenly chronicled with extreme minuteness, till all is obscured in the final misery of dissolution. The feelings of the unhappy wretch himself, of his wife, children,

servants, and friends, are rendered by Tolstoi with that curious clairvoyance which we have seen to be his cardinal gift.

In reflecting upon such a book as *The Death of Ivan Iliitch*, it is natural to ask ourselves in what the realism of Tolstoi consists, and how it differs from that of M. Zola and Mr. Howells. In the first place, their habit of producing an impression by exhaustingly recording all the details which it is possible to observe is not his. Tolstoi, if they are called realists, should be styled an impressionist, not in the sense used by the artists of the present moment, but as Bastien Lepage was an impressionist in painting. If Zola and Howells fill the canvas with details to its remotest corner, Tolstoi concentrates his attention upon one figure or group, and renders the effect of that single object with a force and minute exactitude, which is positively amazing, and which far surpasses theirs. Of course, a book on such a scale as *War and Peace* would not have been conducted to a close at all if the Zola method had been brought to bear upon it. But an examination of Tolstoi's short tales will show that even when he has no need of hus-

banding space, he adopts the same impressionist manner. With him, though observation is vivid, imagination is more vigorous still, and he cannot be tied down to describe more than he chooses to create.

This may serve to explain why his style sometimes seems so negligent, and even confused, and why his stories invariably present *lacunæ*, blank omissions where the writer has simply overlooked a series of events. The progress of Anna's mind, for example, from after her first meeting with Wronsky to the original formation of her infatuated feeling for him, is a hiatus. For some reason or other, it did not interest the novelist, and he blandly omitted to touch it. His lapses of memory, his negligence, may likewise account for the tedious and interminable length at which certain episodes are treated. There are some country scenes in *Anna Karenine*, in the course of which the author seems to have gone to sleep, and to be writing on automatically. Occasionally, Tolstoi's love of what is real leads him to distinct puerility, as in *The Story of a Horse*, where the satire, and something in the very tone of the

narrator's voice remind us, but not favourably, of Hans Andersen. Yet these are slight points, and they simply indicate the limits of a very noble genius. The realists in Russia, as well as elsewhere, have given us many good gifts—they have awakened our observation, have exposed our hallucinations, have shattered our absurd illusions. It is mere injustice to deny that they have been seekers after truth and life, and that sometimes they have touched both the one and the other. But one great gift has commonly eluded their grasp. In their struggle for reality and vividness, they have too often been brutal, or trivial, or sordid. Tolstoi is none of these. As vital as any one of them all, he is what they are not—distinguished. His radical optimism, his belief in the beauty and nobility of the human race, preserve him from the Scylla and the Charybdis of naturalism, from squalor and insipidity. They secure for his best work that quality of personal distinction which does more than anything else to give durability to imaginative literature.

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WORK WHILE YE HAVE THE LIGHT.

INTRODUCTION.

A NUMBER of guests were once gathered under the hospitable roof of a rich man, and it came to pass one day that their conversation took a serious turn, the theme being human life.

They discussed persons who were present and persons who were absent, but they were unable to find among all their acquaintances one single man who was satisfied with his life. Not that any one

of them had reason to grumble at fortune; but not one of them could pretend to look upon the life he was leading as one worthy of a Christian. They all admitted that they were squandering away their existence in a worldly manner, caring only for themselves and their families; taking no thought of their neighbour, and still less of God.

Such was the gist of their remarks, and they were singularly unanimous in finding themselves guilty of leading godless un-Christian lives.

"Why then go on living in this miserable way?" exclaimed a youth who had taken part in the discussion; "why continue to do what we ourselves condemn? Are we not masters of our own lives, free to modify and change them at our will? About one thing we are all perfectly clear:

our luxury, our effeminacy, our riches, but more than all else our overweening pride, and our consequent isolation from our brethren, are hurrying us on to irreparable ruin. In order that we may become distinguished and wealthy, we are forced to deprive ourselves of all that which constitutes the joy of human life; we live huddled together in cities, we grow lax and enervated, undermine our health, and in spite of all our amusements die of *ennui* and of regret that our life is so far removed from what it should be. Now, why should we live so, why thus ruthlessly blast our whole life—wantonly trample upon a priceless boon conferred upon us by God? I, for one, will no longer debase myself by living as heretofore. My unfinished course of studies I will cast to the winds, for they

can lead me to nought else but that bitterly painful existence of which you are all now complaining. I will renounce my estates and retire to the country, where I shall spend all my time with the poor. I will work in their midst, will inure myself to such manual labour as they perform; and should my intellectual culture be needful to them, I will impart it, not through the medium of establishments and books, but directly, living and working among them as among brothers. Yes," he concluded, casting an interrogative glance at his father, who stood there listening to his words, "I have taken my decision."

"Your desire is noble at bottom," said his father, "but it is the unripe fruit of an undeveloped brain. To you everything appears thus feasible because you have not yet tasted life. What would become of us

and the world at large if we were to pursue everything that seemed good and desirable? The realisation of all these desirable things is generally very difficult and complicated. It is no easy matter to make headway even along a smooth and well-beaten track; but how hard must it not be when we have to set to work to make new roads of our own? Such a task is only for those members of the community who have grown perfectly mature, and have assimilated the highest and best that is accessible to man. To you the ordering of life upon wholly new lines seems but child's play, because life to you is still a sealed book. This is the outcome of the thoughtlessness and pride of youth. Hence it is that we sedate people, older in years and wiser in knowledge, are indispensable in order to moderate your fiery

outbursts, and give you the benefit of our experience, while it is your duty to submit to us and be guided by our riper wisdom. Yours will be a life of activity in future years; at present you are in a period of growth and development. Wait till your education is completed, finish your studies, develop your faculties to their fullest capacity, stand on your own legs, form your own convictions, and then adopt the new life you have been sketching for us, if you feel that you possess the needful strength. For the present you are only expected to obey those who are guiding you for your own good, and you are not called upon to remodel human life upon a new basis."

The young man remained silent, and his elders agreed that his father's advice was sound.

"You are perfectly right," cried a middle-

aged married man, addressing his remarks to the last speaker. "No doubt our young friend here, utterly devoid as he is of experience, may easily go astray in his gropings after new ways in the labyrinth of life; nor can his resolve be seriously regarded as steadfast. At the same time, however, we are all agreed that the lives we are leading run counter to the promptings of our consciences, and are productive of no good results to ourselves. Hence we cannot but look with favour on the desire to effect a thorough change in our manner of living. Our young friend may, likely enough, mistake his own fancy for a logical conclusion worked out by his reason; but I am no longer a young man, and I will tell you what I think and feel on the subject. Following attentively the discussion that has been going on here this evening, the

self-same thought that occurred to him suggested itself to me. Personally, I have not the shadow of a doubt that the life I am leading cannot possibly confer upon me happiness or peace of conscience. Reason and experience alike urge this truth upon me. What, then, am I waiting for? From morning to night I toil and moil for my family, with the result that both they and myself, far from living up to the law of God, are sinking deeper day by day in the slough of sin. You work hard for your family, but in the long run your family is not a whit the better for your labour, because your efforts are not a real benefit to it. Hence I often ask myself, whether it would not be much better if I were to change my life completely, and realise the ideas which our young friend has so clearly set before us, taking no thought of my wife or children,

but caring only for the soul. It is not without reason that Paul says, 'He that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. . . . He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.'"

Almost before the speaker could recite this short text to the end, all the women present, his own wife among the number, indignantly protested.

"You should have thought of this long before," exclaimed an elderly lady, who had been attentively listening. "You have made your bed and must lie on it now. It would be a truly pretty state of things, in which every one who found it difficult to maintain his wife and family might shirk his duty by merely signifying a wish to save his soul. This is but fraud

and baseness. A man ought to be able to lead a good, upright life in the bosom of his family; to save oneself alone needs no great art; nay, more, it is even contrary to Christ's teaching. God commands us to love others, and here are you wanting to injure others for God's sake. The truth is that a married man has certain well-defined duties and obligations, and he should not neglect them. It is quite a different matter when the family is already cared for, brought up, and all its members put standing on their own legs. Then you may do as you like for yourself. But surely no one has a right to break up his family."

To this the married man did not assent. "It is not my purpose," he replied, "to abandon my family. I merely contend that it is my duty to bring up my family,

my children, in an unworldly manner, not accustoming them to live for their own pleasures, but, as was suggested a few moments ago, inuring them to want, to work, teaching them to give a helping hand to their fellows, and, above all, to treat all men as brothers. And to this end it is indispensable to renounce distinction and riches."

"It is quite absurd for you to go talking about breaking in others to the new life while you yourself are further from it than any of us," exclaimed his wife, with much warmth. "You have always lived in the lap of luxury, from your childhood upwards, and why should you now wish to torture your wife and children? Let them grow up in peace and quiet, and then leave them to undertake for themselves whatever line of life commends itself to them; but don't

you go compelling them to embrace this way of living or that."

To this the married man made no reply, but an aged man sitting near him delivered himself as follows:

"It is quite true, no doubt, that a married man who has accustomed his wife and children to ease and comfort should not deprive them of it all of a sudden. There is also great force in the argument that once the education of the children has been begun on certain lines, it is much better to continue and complete it, than breaking it off to commence something else; especially as the children themselves, when grown up, will not fail to choose the way that is best for them. I am therefore of opinion that it is difficult—nay, and sinful too—for a married man to change his life. It is quite a different matter with us

old men, whom God himself, so to say, has commanded to do so. I may, perhaps, be allowed to speak for myself: I live practically without any duties or obligations whatever; I live, if the truth must be told, solely for my belly. I eat, drink, rest myself, and am myself disgusted and sick of it all. Now for me it is surely high time to abandon this wretched life, to distribute my earthly goods, and to live now, at least, on the eve of my death, as God ordained that Christians should live."

But even the old man found no support. His niece was present, and his godchild, all of whose children he had held at the baptismal font and gratified with presents on holidays ever since, and also his own son. They one and all objected.

"No, no," said his son. "You have worked quite hard enough in your time,

and it is meet that you should now rest and not kill yourself outright. You have lived for sixty years with your tastes and habits, and it is not at this time of day that you can think of giving them up. The outcome of any such attempt on your part would be that you would subject yourself to great torture with no result whatever."

"Quite so," chimed in his niece, "and when you are in want, you know, you will be out of sorts and always grumbling, and consequently will be sinning more grievously than ever before. Besides, God is merciful and pardons all sinners, not to speak of such a dear, good uncle as yourself."

"Yes; and why should we stir in this matter at all?" asked another old man of the same age as the uncle. "You and I

have perhaps two days more to live; why fritter them away in making plans and projects?"

"How extraordinary!" cried one of the guests (he had uttered no word during the entire discussion), "how incomprehensible! We are all agreed that we should live in accordance with God's law, and that we are actually living badly, sinfully, and are suffering in body and in soul in consequence, and yet no sooner is it a question of putting our conclusions in practice than we discover that children should be excepted—they, forsooth, are not to be disciplined in the new life, but educated on the old lines. Then young men should not go against the will of their parents, and so instead of embracing the new ideas should make the best of the old. Married men, again, have no right to discipline

their wives and children, and inure them to the new way of living—and so they, too, should live the sinful life of the past. As for old men, it is too late for them to begin; they are not accustomed to the hardships of the new life, and, besides, they have only two or three days left to live. It appears, therefore, that no one should lead a good, upright, spiritual life; the utmost people may do is to discourse about it."

CHAPTER I.

It happened in the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan, one hundred years after the birth of Christ. The disciples of Christ's disciples were still in the flesh, and the Christians of that day held fast to the law of the Master, as the author of the Acts of the Apostles tells us: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace

was upon them all. Neither were there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

In those early years of Christianity there lived in the province of Cilicia, in the town of Tarsus, a wealthy Syrian merchant named Juvenal, who dealt in precious stones. By birth he belonged to the poorest and lowest class of the community; but by dint of hard work, and by the skill he acquired in his calling, he accumulated considerable riches, and won the respect of his fellow-citizens. He had travelled much in various lands, and, although he possessed no claim to be regarded as learned or educated, he had seen and assimilated

much, and his fellow-burghers held him in high esteem for his sound intellect and keen sense of justice. He professed the faith of Pagan Rome, the religion to which all respectable citizens of the Roman Empire belonged, and whose forms and ceremonies began to be strictly enforced in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, and were still rigidly observed by the Emperor Trajan. The province of Cilicia is at a considerable distance from Rome; but it was ruled by a Roman Governor, and the effects of every wave of progress and retrogression that passed over Rome were distinctly felt in Cilicia, whose Governors were ever eager to imitate their Emperor.

Juvenal had a vivid recollection of the stories he had heard when a lad of Nero's life and death; it was within his own memory how Emperor after Emperor had

come to an untimely end, and, like a shrewd observer, he perceived that there was nothing sacred either in the Imperial power or in the Roman religion; that both were the work of human hands. This same native shrewdness of his served likewise to bring home to his mind the futility of rising up against the Imperial authority, and the necessity, for his own peace and happiness, of submitting to the established order of things. Yet for all this he was often bewildered by the wild disorder of the life around him, especially in Rome itself, whither his affairs frequently took him. And at such times he was seized with disquieting doubts; but he regained his wonted composure by reflecting that his mind was too circumscribed to take in every point of view, too undisciplined to draw the right conclusions from such facts

as he observed. He was married, and had had four children, three of whom died young. His surviving son was named Julius.

In Julius was centred all his love; he was the object of all his tender care. It was his special endeavour so to educate and train up this boy as to spare him in after life the excruciating pains which he himself experienced from his frequent doubts and perplexities about the problem of life.

When Julius attained his fifteenth year, his father confided him to the care of a philosopher who had come to live in the town for the purpose of taking in young men and educating them. Into the charge of this teacher he gave his son, and his son's young comrade Pamphilius, the son of a freedman of his who had died some

time previously. The boys were of the same age, both of them handsome, manly young fellows, and good friends to boot.

They applied themselves vigorously to their studies and made rapid progress. They were also, both of them, well-conducted. Julius evinced a marked predilection for letters and mathematics, while Pamphilius' taste led him to pursue the study of philosophy.

A year before the completion of the prescribed course of studies, Pamphilius came into school one day and informed the master that his widowed mother intended to leave the city for good, and settle with a few friends in the little town of Daphne; that it would be his duty to accompany her and make himself useful to her; and that he must, in consequence,

withdraw from the school and bring his studies thus abruptly to an end.

The master was sorry to lose a pupil who reflected such credit on his teacher; Juvenal likewise regretted the departure of his son's bosom friend, but no one felt his loss so keenly as Julius. But Pamphilius remained deaf to all their entreaties that he should spend another year at school and finish his education. Thanking his friends for the many proofs of their affection they had given him, he bade them good-bye and departed.

Two years whirled past. Julius had completed his course of studies without having once seen his friend. One day he was agreeably surprised to meet him in the street; he asked him to his father's house, where he examined and cross-examined him as to where and how he

had lived since they parted. Pamphilius told him that he was still living with his mother in the same place.

"We are not living alone," he added. "We have many friends with us with whom we enjoy everything in common."

"How do you mean in common?" asked Julius.

"So that none of us looks upon anything as his own property."

"Why do you do that, may I ask?"

"Because we are Christians," answered Pamphilius.

"Is it possible!" cried Julius.

Now to be a Christian in those days meant about the same thing as being a conspirator in these. The moment a person was convicted of belonging to the Christian sect he was arrested, put in prison, tried, and if he refused to abjure

his faith, put to death. It was the consciousness of all this that terrified Julius when he learned that his comrade had embraced the new faith. He had heard unutterable horrors attributed to the Christians.

"I am told that Christians butcher little children and eat them. Can it be that you too take part in these atrocities?"

"Come and see for yourself," replied Pamphilius. "We do nothing out of the common, we live in a simple way, striving to do nothing bad."

"But how, pray, is it possible to get along without looking upon anything as your own property?"

"We support ourselves. And if we labour in the service of our brethren, they in turn share with us the fruits of their toil."

"Well, but how if your brethren take your services and give you nothing in return?" insisted Julius.

"We have no such persons among us," replied Pamphilius. "People of that bent have a taste for living luxuriously, and it is not in our community that they will come to seek the realisation of their desires; our living is simple, not luxurious, nor even comfortable."

"Yes, but there exists a goodly number of lazy, idle people who ask nothing better than to be kept and fed for nothing."

"There certainly are such persons, and we receive them and give them a hearty welcome. We lately had a man of that description—a runaway slave. At first he led a lazy, good-for-nothing life; but he soon turned over a new leaf, and is now an exemplary brother."

"Well, but what if he had not reformed?"

"There are some of that category also; our Elder, Cyril, says that it is especially incumbent upon us to treat such people as dearly beloved brethren, and to let slip no opportunity of showing them our love."

"But is it possible to love rascals?"

"It is wrong not to love your fellow-man."

"Tell me now how you can bring yourselves to give every one whatever it pleases him to ask of you?" inquired Julius. "I know," he added, "that if my father were to give every one what he wants and asks for, in a very short space of time he would be as poor as when he came into the world."

"I cannot say," Pamphilius made answer; "but somehow we always have enough to

satisfy our needs. And if it should come to pass that we have nothing to eat, or to cover our bodies with, we ask what we lack of others, and they do not withhold it. That happens but very rarely, however. For my part, I have only once had to lie down at night without having had my supper, and even then it was chiefly because I was tired out that evening, and did not feel disposed to go off to one of the brethren and ask him for a meal."

"Well, of course I don't pretend to know how you manage these things," observed Julius; "but my father maintains that if he did not look carefully after his own, and if he were to give to all who came a-begging, he would very soon be eaten out of house and home, and left to die of hunger."

"We don't die of hunger. But you had

better come and see for yourself. Not only are we alive, and not in want, but we have even a superfluity."

"How do you explain it?"

"In this way. We all profess one and the same law; but the degree of strength we possess to observe it varies greatly, one man being endowed with a much greater degree of it than another. Thus one person may have already attained to perfection in the good life, while another may be still struggling with the difficulties that are met with at the outset. High above us all Christ stands clearly out with His life, and it is our constant endeavour to imitate Him. In this we place our happiness. Some members of our community—like the Elder Cyrill, for instance, and the woman Pelagea—are farther advanced than any of us; others stand close behind

them; others, again, are still further behind; but we are, all of us, moving forwards in the same direction, on the same road.

"The pioneers are already near the law of Christ—abnegation of self—having lost their soul in order to find it. Men of this type want nothing. They feel no pity for themselves, and to fulfil Christ's law they would gladly give the last loaf, the last garment, to him who asks for it. There are others—weaker souls—who cannot as yet give up everything. They grow faint and take pity upon themselves. They lose their strength without their usual food or clothing, and so they cannot yet bring themselves to give away everything demanded of them.

"There are others still weaker than these—persons who have only recently

entered upon the right road. They still go on living as before; hoarding up many things for their own use, and give alms only of their superfluity. Now these soldiers of the rearguard afford material help and support to those who are in the front ranks.

"Moreover, it should not be lost sight of that we are all entangled in the web of kinship with Pagans. One brother has a father still living who is an idolater; he owns an estate, and he makes an allowance to his son. The son distributes it in alms, and the father in due time forwards more. Another has a Pagan mother, who commiserates her son and sends him help. In another case it is the children who are heathens, while the mother is a Christian. The children, anxious to ensure their mother's comfort, give her what they can

afford, entreating her not to distribute it to others. She accepts it out of love for them, but forthwith gives it all away. In other cases the wife is a Pagan and the husband a Christian, or else the reverse.

"Thus it is that we are all inextricably entangled. Those in front would be happy to give away the last crust of bread, the last rag of clothing, but they cannot; for what seems the last is always succeeded by another. It is in this wise that the weak are always being strengthened in the faith, and the same state of things explains why it is that we are never without the superfluous."

To which Julius made answer as follows: "If that be so, it is obvious that you swerve considerably from the teaching of Christ, and put seeming in the place of being. If you do not give away every-

thing, there is no difference whatever between you and us. To my thinking, if you once set up to be a Christian, you should go about it in a thorough fashion, and fulfil every iota of the law, distributing everything in alms and remaining a beggar."

"Truly, that would be best of all," assented Pamphilius; "why do you not do so?"

"I will, when you Christians set me the example."

"Oh, we have no wish to do anything for the sake of show. Nor should I advise you to come over to us and leave your own surroundings, merely for the sake of effect. Whatever we do is undertaken in virtue of our faith."

"What do you mean by the expression 'in virtue of our faith'?"

"I mean that we hold that escape from the evils of the world, from death, is to be found only in life as Christ understood it. As to what people will say of us, it does not matter. We live as we do, not in order to please people, but because we see therein the only means of obtaining life and happiness."

"It is impossible not to live for oneself," objected Julius; "the gods have made it part of our nature that we should love ourselves more dearly than all others, and should seek our own enjoyment. And this is precisely what you Christians also do. You have admitted, yourself, that the pity which many of your brethren feel is for themselves. They will go on gradually seeking more and more keenly their own pleasures, and in a corresponding degree throwing aside the teachings of your faith;

and in this they will be doing just as we do."

"No, not so," replied Pamphilius. "Our brethren are travelling on a different road, and they never grow fainter and weaker, but continually stronger; just as fire never goes out as long as fuel continues to be heaped upon it. Such is the force of faith."

"Still I fail to see in what this faith consists."

"Our faith consists in this, that we understand life as Christ interpreted it for us."

"And that is?"

"Christ once related the following parable: Certain husbandmen cultivated a vineyard planted by a householder, for which they were bound to give him of the fruit. We who live in the world are these husbandmen, and we are bound to pay

tribute to God, to fulfil His will. But the people who lived and believed with the world imagined that the vineyard was theirs; that they had nothing to pay for it, but might enjoy the fruits it brought forth without more ado. And the lord of the vineyard sent a servant to collect the tribute, but they drove him away. He then despatched his son, but they killed him, thinking that after this no one would ever again interfere with them. Now this is the world's faith, by which all worldlings regulate their lives, ignoring the fact that life is given to be spent in God. Christ taught us that the faith of the world—viz., that it will be better for a man if he drives the lord's servant and his son out of his garden and refuses to pay tribute—is false, because every man must either pay tribute, or be ejected from the vineyard. He

taught us that the things which we term pleasures—eating, drinking, amusements, &c.—are not, and cannot be, pleasures, if we make them our aim in life; that they become joys only when we place our happiness in something different—namely, the fulfilment of God's will. Then, and only then, are these pleasures experienced, as something added to and contingent upon the performance of God's behests. To wish to enjoy the pleasures without being at the trouble of doing God's will, to pluck out the flowers as it were from among the thorns of labour, is as wise as it would be to gather stalks and plant them without the roots. This is our faith, and it is in virtue of it that we refuse to go in search of an illusion instead of the truth. We know that the happiness of life is not bound up with its pleasures, but lies in the

fulfilment of the will of God, without our entertaining a thought or a hope of any pleasure. And we live thus in consequence; and the longer we live, the more clearly we perceive that enjoyment and bliss follow close upon the performance of God's will, as the wheels of the cart follow the shaft. Our Master said: 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Thus spoke Pamphilius. Julius listened with rapt attention, and his heart was touched by what he heard; but still he was not quite clear as to the significance of all that Pamphilius had been saying. One moment he suspected his friend of attempting to deceive him; an instant later, as he gazed steadily into his mild, truthful eyes, he persuaded himself that Pamphilius was deceiving himself.

Pamphilius invited his friend to pay him a visit, during which he might study the life of their community for himself, and, should it please him, to take up his abode with them for the rest of his days. And Julius promised that he would.

He promised, but he did not visit Pamphilius; and, carried away by the whirl of the life of a large city, he soon forgot all about him. He seemed to have an instinctive fear that the life of the Christians might prove too attractive for him to withstand. He therefore pictured it to himself as an existence in which one had to renounce all the bright sides of life. And he could not prevail upon himself to give them up, because in them he centred the aim and object of his life. He blamed and condemned the Christians, and he set great store by this condemnation; he was

apprehensive lest he might some time or other cease to condemn them, and for this reason he availed himself of every opportunity that offered to seek for the seamy side of Christianity. Wherever and whenever he came in contact with Christians in the city, he invariably discovered some pretext in their conduct for censuring them. When he saw them in the market-place selling fruit and vegetables, he would say to himself, and sometimes to them: "You profess to own nothing, and yet here you are selling products for money, instead of giving them away for nothing to whoever wants to take them; you are deluding yourselves, and deceiving others." And he refused to listen to their arguments, by which they sought to convince him that it was necessary and just that they should sell their products in the market, and not

give them away. Whenever he saw a Christian wearing a good, well-made article of clothing, he never failed to reproach him with inconsistency for not having given it away. It was indispensable to his peace of mind that Christians should be wrong, and, as they never denied that they were in fault, they were always guilty in his eyes. He looked upon them as Pharisees, deceivers, whose force lay in their high-flown phrases and their weakness in action. And of himself, he remarked, by way of contrast, "I at least profess what I practise, whereas you say one thing and do another." And, having persuaded himself that this was really so, he felt quite reassured and continued to live as before.

CHAPTER II.

By nature, Julius was gifted with a mild, amiable disposition; but, like most young men of his time and country, he was the owner of slaves, whom he often punished in a barbarous manner, either when they neglected to carry out his commands, or simply when he himself was out of sorts. He was the possessor of a collection of precious, useless curios, and rich costumes, to which he was continually making new additions. He was also fond of theatres and spectacles, and from his youth upwards provided himself with mistresses; and he often abandoned himself, in the

society of his friends, to gross excesses in eating and drinking. In a word, his life glided onwards smoothly and gaily—as it seemed to him; for he could not himself survey its course. It was made up almost exclusively of amusements, and the number of them was so great that he lacked even the time to give the matter a thought.

Two years passed rapidly away in this seemingly delightful manner, and Julius took it for granted that all the years of life must naturally roll by as pleasantly as these two. But, in the nature of things, this is an utter impossibility; for in a life like that which Julius was leading it is indispensable to go on continually increasing and intensifying the amusements, in order to maintain the pleasure undiminished. If, in the beginning, he enjoyed quaffing a goblet of mellow wine in the

company of a friend, the pleasure cloyed after several repetitions, and he soon found it necessary to drink two or three such goblets of still better wine, in order to obtain the same amount of enjoyment. If at first it was pleasant to while away an hour or two in converse with a friend, the pleasure soon wore off; and, in order to spend that time with an equal degree of satisfaction, it soon became needful to substitute a female for a male friend; and later on even this failed of its effect, and something else was required. In time, this new arrangement likewise proved a failure; the same friends, even though they were female friends, became tiresome in the end, and had to be changed. And so with all his pastimes and amusements: in order to make them yield the same amount of pleasure, it became necessary to increase and intensify

them, to make greater demands on the co-operation of others; and for people who do not happen to be rulers, there was and is but one way of making other people comply with one's wishes—namely, by means of money. It was so with Julius. He gave himself up to pleasures of the body, and, not being a ruler, could not command others to be subservient to his desires, so that, to purchase their co-operation and increase his pleasures, he needed money.

Now Julius' father was a rich man, and as he loved and was proud of his only son, he opened wide his purse to gratify his every whim, stinting him in nothing. Julius' life, therefore, was that of rich young men all the world over—one of idleness, luxury, and immoral amusements, which have always been, and will ever

remain, the same—wine, gambling, and light, venal women.

But his pleasures continued to absorb ever increasing sums of money, and his sources of income frequently ran dry. One day he asked his father for a larger sum than usual. His father granted his request, but reprimanded him for his prodigality. He knew in his heart that he was guilty and the reproaches well merited; but he could not bear to admit his guilt, and so he lost his temper and was insolent to his father, as is usually the way with persons who know themselves to be in fault, but are unwilling to confess it. He received the sum he asked for and speedily squandered it. What was still worse, he and a drunken comrade of his picked a quarrel with some man and killed him. The city prefect, informed of what

had taken place, had Julius taken into custody; but his father, after considerable exertions, succeeded in obtaining his pardon. During all this time, the demands on Julius' purse, in consequence of the troubles into which his pleasures landed him, became greater and more frequent. He borrowed a large sum of a comrade, promising soon to refund it. Moreover, his mistress selected this time of all others to demand more presents; she had taken a fancy to a necklace of pearls, and he could see that if he did not humour her caprice in the matter she would shake him off, and give him a successor in the person of a wealthy man who had made repeated attempts to supplant Julius. In his straits Julius went to his mother, told her that, come what would, he must have the money, and that if she could not raise the sum

needed, he would put an end to his existence.

The circumstance that he had drifted into this embarrassing situation, he ascribed wholly to his father; to himself he took no share of the blame.

"My father," he argued, "first accustomed me to a life of luxury, and now he turns round and grudges me the funds necessary to maintain it. If in the beginning he had given me, without any reproaches, the sums he gave later on, I should have been able to arrange my life very comfortably, steering clear of impecuniosity and want. But as he always insisted on doling out his money in mites, I never possessed enough for my needs, and had to have dealings with usurers, who suck me as a spider sucks a fly; and now that I lack the wherewithal to keep

up the kind of life to which I am accustomed, and which alone beseems young men of my station, I am ashamed to meet my friends and companions, and my father obstinately refuses to put himself in my position and realise my difficulties. He forgets that he, too, was once young. Why, it is actually he whom I have to blame for everything I am now enduring; and if he does not give me the sum I have asked for I will kill myself. That's just the long and the short of it."

His mother, who had always spoiled her son, straightway went to her husband. He sent for his son and bitterly reproached both him and his mother. Julius made insolent replies. His father struck him. He seized his father by the hand. His father shouted for the slaves, and

ordered them to bind his son and lock him up.

In the solitude of his room, Julius cursed his father and his life. His own or his father's death suggested itself to his mind as the only issue out of his present desperate condition.

Julius' mother suffered infinitely more than her son. She did not pause to inquire who was really to blame in all this. She was possessed by one sole sentiment —compassion for her unhappy child. She again sought out her husband and implored him to forgive the boy. Instead of listening to what she had to urge, he reviled her and accused her of having demoralised her son. She hurled back the reproaches, and the scene ended by her husband beating her. Undaunted by what had come of her intercession with her

husband, she yielded again to her maternal instinct, which prompted her to hurry off to her son and beg him to ask his father's forgiveness. In return for this sacrifice on his part, she promised to supply him with the sum of money he required unknown to his father. He assented, and she then went to her husband and implored him to forgive his son. At first he loaded mother and son with reproaches, but at last he agreed to pardon his son on one condition—that he would abandon for ever his dissolute life and marry the daughter of a certain wealthy merchant, whose consent he undertook to obtain.

"He will receive money from me as well as a dowry from his bride," he added, "and then let him begin to lead a new regular life. If he promises to do my will

in this matter, I forgive him. At present I will give him nothing, and on his first offence I will hand him over to the city authorities."

Julius accepted the terms proposed by his father and was set at liberty. He promised to marry as directed, and live a reformed life, but he had not the slightest intention of doing either. His life at home had become a hell to him. His father never spoke to him, and was perpetually upbraiding his mother on his account. His mother was continually in tears.

The day following his release, his mother sent for him and secretly handed him over jewels, which she had abstracted from her husband. "Here they are," she said, "take them away and sell them; but not here, in some other city,

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and do with the proceeds what you say is necessary. I think I can answer for their disappearance remaining undiscovered for some days at least. But if it should leak out, I will put the blame on one of the slaves."

Julius' heart was greatly troubled by these words of his mother. He was horrified at what she had done for him, and, without taking or touching the precious stones, he left the house. Why and whither was he going? He knew not. He went on and on beyond the city boundaries, feeling the absolute necessity of being alone and of meditating on all that had happened to him, and on what still awaited him. Leaving the city behind him, he entered a shady grove sacred to the goddess Diana. Making for a solitary spot there, he gave himself up to

meditation. His first impulse was to pray to the goddess and ask her for help. But he no longer believed in the gods of the empire, and knew that prayers to them would prove unavailing, succour from that quarter an impossibility. But if they could not comfort and assist him, who could? It appeared strange and preposterous for him to be compelled to do his own thinking in this matter. Disorder and darkness reigned in his heart. And yet there was no other alternative. There was nothing for it but to appeal to his own conscience, and in the lurid light it shed he began to scrutinise the main actions of his life. He discovered that they were bad, and, what he had never before suspected, foolish. What made him torment himself so? What impelled him to waste all the young years of his life so wantonly? The

thoughts that these questions suggested had little to console him and much to make him miserable. What enhanced his suffering more than all else was the feeling of utter loneliness that oppressed him. Hitherto he had had a loving mother, a father to look to; he was not without a certain number of friends. But now he was quite alone in the universe. No longer loved by any one, he was a burden to all. He had crossed every one's path in life; had caused his mother to quarrel with his father; had scattered to the winds the riches that his father had spent the labour of a lifetime in slowly accumulating; he had become a disagreeable and dangerous rival to his friends. Was it so strange, then, if they all longed for his death, as he supposed they did?

Prominent among the figures that rose up before his mind's eye during this roll-call of past years was Pamphilius, cordially welcoming him to the Christian community, and bidding him leave everything and cast in his lot with them. And the impulse to do so grew strong upon him. "But is my position, then, so utterly hopeless?" he asked himself; and, as he again conjured up the events of recent years, his heart sank within him at the thought that no one loved him more. Father, mother, friends, could not possibly cherish any affection for him; indeed, they could not do otherwise than desire his death. But did he himself love any one? He felt that he was attached to none of his friends. They were, all of them, his rivals, and had not a throb of pity for him now that his

misfortunes were thick upon him. And his father? he asked himself. And, looking into his heart to find the answer there, was appalled at what he saw. Not only did he not love his father, but he actually hated him for the restrictions, the insults, he had put upon him. Yes, hate was the word; he hated him, and, more than that, he perceived clearly that to his own happiness his father's death was absolutely indispensable.

"Yes, this is so. And suppose I knew that no one would ever see or hear of it, how would I act if I had it in my power to take his life at a single blow, and free myself from his tyranny?" And Julius distinctly replied to himself: "I would kill him;" and he was horrified that it was so. "And my mother?" he asked. "Yes, I

pity, but do not love her. I do not care what becomes of her; all I want is her help. . . . . Why, I am a wild beast! A wild beast at bay, hounded down; and the sole difference between myself and the beast is that I can, if I so will it, leave this deceitful, wicked life; I can do what the wild beast cannot — kill myself. I hate my father; I love no one, neither mother nor friends—perhaps Pamphilius alone."

And he again reverted to his friend, calling to mind their last meeting, their conversation, and the words of Christ cited by Pamphilius: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Can that be true?" he asked himself. He began to stir up his recollections of the discussion with Pamphilius, and his memory dwelt with pre-

dilection on the serene, fearless, and joyful countenance of his friend, and he was filled with a desire to see and hear him again, and, above all, to believe what he had been told by him. "Who am I after all? A man in search of happiness. I sought for it in luxury and lust, but failed to find it there. And those who live as I have lived will fail in like manner. They are malicious, and are all of them suffering. On the other hand, there is one man who is always joyful, because he is not in search of anything. He tells me that there are many such as he, that all men may become such; that I, for one, can, if I be so minded, on condition that I carry out the precepts given by his Master. Now, what if all this be true? True or not true, there's an attraction about it which I cannot withstand. I shall go."

And repeating this to himself, Julius passed out of the shady grove, and, deter-termined never again to return home, wended his way to the village in which the Christians lived.

CHAPTER III.

JULIUS walked on briskly, his spirits rising in proportion as he drew nearer the village, and the colours grew more distinct and life-like in the picture he set before his mind of the life led by the Christians.

Just as the sun was sinking beneath the horizon and he was about to take a short rest, he met a man by the wayside, reposing and taking his evening meal.

He was a person of middle age, and, to judge by externals, of considerable intellectual culture. He was seated, and was leisurely eating olives and bread. As soon as he saw Julius he said with a smile:

"Good-evening, young man, you have still a long journey before you. Be seated and rest yourself awhile." Julius thanked him and sat down beside him.

"Whither bound, may I ask?" he queried.

"I am going to the Christians," replied Julius; and in answer to further questions narrated his whole life and the mental process which had resulted in this sudden resolution.

The stranger listened attentively and in silence, broken rarely by such questions as seemed necessary to clear up some obscure allusion or throw light upon some event or opinion, the knowledge of which had been taken for granted. Comment or opinion he offered none. When at length Julius brought his story to an end, he gathered up the food that remained over after his

meal was done, adjusted his garments, and said: "Young man, do not carry out your design; you have wandered away from the direct road. I know life; you do not. Listen; I shall analyse the principal events of your past history and your reflections upon them; and after you have had them presented to you in the form which they have assumed in my mind, you can take any course that commends itself to you as wise. You are young, wealthy, handsome, strong—your heart is a seething whirlpool of raging passions. You now yearn for a quiet retreat in which those passions shall not disturb you, and you shall be spared the suffering produced by their effects; and you are willing to believe that you will find such a haven among the Christians. Now there is no such port of safety, dear young friend, there or elsewhere; because

that which agitates and torments you is not located in Cilicia or in Rome, but has its abode within yourself. In the quiet of a sequestered village those same passions will rage within you and convulse you, only a hundredfold more violently than before. The fraud or mistake of the Christians (I have no mind to judge them) consists in their refusal to recognise human nature. The only persons really capable of putting Christian teachings in practice are old men, in whom the snow and frost of age have quenched the last embers of human passion. A man in the flower of his years and strength, especially a young man like yourself, who has not yet tasted the fruits of life and does not even know his own mind, cannot submit to their law, because that law is founded, not on human nature, but on the idle imaginings of Christ

their founder. If you become one of them, you will continue to suffer from the same causes as before, only to a much greater extent. Now, your passions lure you out of the right road into devious paths and byways; but having once gone astray, you have it in your power to retrace your steps and set yourself right; and you enjoy, besides, the satisfaction of passions set free —*i.e.*, the joy of life. But living as a Christian and curbing your passions, so to say, by force, you will still be able to go astray, only more frequently and irremediably than before, and you will endure over and above the undying torment caused by the unappeased appetites of human nature. Let loose the pent-up water of a dam, and it will moisten and fructify field and meadow and refresh the beasts that are grazing thereon; but dam it up, and it will delve

into the soil and flow in a thick muddy stream. It is even so with the human passions. The teaching of the Christians (with the exception of certain beliefs with which they console and comfort themselves, and on which I have no wish to dwell at present), in so far as it affects their daily life, may be summed up as follows: they condemn violence; they disapprove of wars and courts of justice; they refuse to recognise property; they repudiate the sciences and arts—in a word, they eschew everything that tends to make life bright and pleasant. Even this would be well, if all men corresponded to the description which they give of their teacher. But so far is this from being the case, that it is an absolute impossibility. Men are naturally evil-minded and swayed by their passions. It is this constant play of the passions, and

the clashing and struggling that results, which hold people fast in that network of conditions in which they live. Savages know no restrictions, and a single individual among them would, for the sake of glutting his lusts, annihilate the entire world, if all men submitted to evil as meekly as the Christians. If the gods endowed man with a sentiment of anger, vindictiveness, even of malice against the malicious, we may take it that they did so because those sentiments were necessary to the preservation of human life.

"The Christians hold that these sentiments are evil, and that without them men would be happy; there would then be no murders, no executions, no wars. This is true, but one might just as well assert that it would materially contribute to the happiness of men if they were

relieved of the necessity of eating and drinking.

"There would, indeed, be no hunger nor thirst, nor any of the calamities they produce. But this supposition does not change human nature one iota. And so it is with all the other human passions: indignation, malice, vindictiveness, even sexual love, and love of luxury, pomp and greatness, are likewise characteristics of the gods; hence they are also, in a modified form, traits proper to mankind. Root out the necessity of nourishing man, and at the same stroke you annihilate man himself; in like manner, demolish the human passions, and you thereby demolish humanity itself. The same remark holds good of property, which the Christians, it is alleged, refuse to recognise. Look around you, and you will find that every

vineyard, every kitchen garden, every house, every mule, has been produced solely and alone because property existed and was respected. Abolish the principle of private property, and there will not be a single vineyard planted, not a beast of burden trained or broken in. The Christians assert that they possess no property, but they enjoy its fruits. They say that they have everything in common, and that they bring in all their possessions and put them together. But what they bring in they have received from men who own property. They are simply throwing dust in people's eyes, or, on the most favourable supposition, are deceiving themselves. You tell me that they work with their own hands to support themselves; but what they produce would not suffice to support them if they did not lay under contribution

that which had been produced by other people who recognise the rights of property. If they did succeed in supporting life, there would be no place in their social system for the arts and sciences. They deny the advantages of our arts and sciences. And they cannot do otherwise. The whole gist and tenor of their teaching is calculated to lead man back to his primitive state—to savagery, to beastliness. They cannot enjoy the arts and sciences in the service of humanity, and, as they are wholly ignorant of them, they reject them. Neither can they employ in the service of humanity those capacities and gifts which constitute the exclusive prerogative of man and draw him nearer to the gods. They will have no temples, no statues, no theatres, no museums. They assert that they have no need of them. The readiest

way to avoid blushing at one's own baseness is to contemn nobility. Their teacher was an ignorant deceiver, and they are not unsuccessful in their attempts to imitate him. Furthermore, they are impious. They refuse to recognise the gods or their interference in human affairs. They acknowledge only the Father of their teacher, whom they call their Father, and their teacher himself, who, they say, revealed to them all the secrets of life. Their doctrine is a wretched fraud. Weigh this well: our belief is that the universe is maintained by the gods, and that the gods watch over and protect man. In order to live well, people are bound to honour the gods, to seek truth, and think. Hence our life is regulated, on the one hand, by the will of the gods, and on the other by the collective wisdom of humanity.

We live, think, and seek, and are therefore advancing towards truth. They, on the contrary, have no gods, nor divine will, nor human wisdom to look to, but must make the best of their blind faith in their crucified teacher, and in whatever he taught them. Now, decide for yourself, which is the more trustworthy guide: the will of the gods and the joint untrammeled activity of the wisdom of all humanity, or obligatory, unreasoning faith in the sayings of one man."

Julius was struck by these remarks of the stranger, especially by his last question. Not only was his resolution to become a Christian completely shaken, but it now seemed quite incredible that the stress of misfortune should have driven him to the verge of such folly. There was, however, one other question still unsettled:

what was he to do now, and how was he to set about extricating himself from the embarrassing situation that had made him thus desperate? And having pointed out this difficulty, he asked the stranger for advice.

"I was coming to that very problem," the stranger said. "What is to be done? The line of action you must pursue is, as far as human wisdom is accessible to me, perfectly clear. All your troubles have their source in your passions. It was passion that whirled you away and took you so out of your road, that you have suffered gravely in consequence. Life's lessons usually take this form. You should learn them well and benefit by them. You have experienced much, and you now know what is sweet and what is bitter. You run no risk of unwittingly

repeating the same mistakes. Profit by your experience. What grieves and upsets you most is your enmity with your father. It had its origin in your position. Choose another one and it will vanish, or at least will no longer manifest itself in the same acute form.

"All your sufferings are due to the irregularity of your position. You abandoned yourself to the pleasures of youth. This was natural, and therefore right. And it continued right as long as it beseemed your age. But the season passed, and yet you continued with the strength of a man to indulge in the freaks of a youth; and this was wrong. You are now of an age when your will must supplement Nature's, and you must become a man, a citizen, and serve the commonwealth, working for the good of all as well as your

own. Your father suggests that you should marry. This is wise counsel. You have passed through one stage of life—youth—and have now entered upon another. All our uneasiness and fears are but so many symptoms of a period of transition. Look the truth manfully in the face; admit that the season of youth is gone by, and flinging dauntlessly aside everything that was proper to that season, without being characteristic of manhood, enter the new road. Marry: give up the frivolous gaieties of youth; occupy your mind with the interests of commerce; with public affairs; with sciences and arts; and not only will you be reconciled with your father and your friends, but you will find rest and happiness. The root of your troubles was the abnormal, unnatural position you occupied. You have now reached

manhood's estate, and it is your duty to take a wife and become a man. Hence my chief counsel to you is: carry out your father's wish—marry.

"If you feel that that isolation and retirement which you imagine exists among the Christians has still a charm for you; if you are attracted to the study of philosophy rather than to the activity of public life, you can give loose reins to your wishes with benefit to yourself, only on condition that you have first studied life and learned its inner meaning. And this you can do only as an independent citizen and father of a family. If, when you have reached that point, you still feel drawn as strongly as ever towards retirement and contemplation, give yourself up to it without hesitation, for it will then be a genuine predilection, and not a mere outburst of discontent,

as it clearly is at present. Then follow whither it leads you."

The last words, more than anything that had gone before, brought conviction to the mind of Julius. He warmly thanked the stranger and returned home. His mother gave him a most cordial welcome. His father, too, informed of his resolution to submit to his will and marry the young girl he had chosen for him, became reconciled with his son.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE months later Julius' marriage with the beautiful Eulalia was duly celebrated, and the young couple took up their residence in a house of their own. Julius, having radically changed his way of life, took over that branch of commerce which his father ceded to him, and began fairly to settle down as a respectable member of the community.

One day he drove over to a little town not far distant, on some business connected with his firm, and there, while lounging in a merchant's shop, he caught sight of Pamphilius passing by the door along with a

girl who was unknown to him. They were both heavily laden with grapes, which they offered for sale. Julius, recognising his friend, went out to him, greeted him, and asked him in to pass an hour in quiet conversation.

The girl, observing Pamphilius' desire to enter the shop with his friend, and noticing that he hesitated to leave her alone, at once assured him that she did not need his services, and that she would sit there by herself and wait for a purchaser for the grapes.

Pamphilius thanked her, and accompanied Julius into the shop. Julius asked and received permission of his friend, the merchant, to retire with Pamphilius to an inner apartment, where they might enjoy a little quiet talk.

Once there, the friends began to ques-

tion each other about the ups and downs they had met with since they had last seen each other.

Pamphilius' life had glided smoothly on, bringing no material change since then; he still lived in the Christian community, was a bachelor as before, and felt, he assured his friend, that every year, every day, and every hour brought him increase of happiness.

Julius thereupon narrated his experiences, and described how he had been on the point of becoming a Christian, and was already on the road to the Christian village, when he was stopped by the stranger, who opened his eyes to the errors of the Christians, and made him sensible of his duty to marry; "and I acted upon his advice, and am now a married man," he concluded.

"And are you happy now?" asked

Pamphilius. "Have you found in marriage the bliss the stranger promised you?"

"Happy?" repeated Julius. "What is the meaning of the word happy? If we are to take it to denote the perfect realisation of one's desires, then I am not happy. I am conducting my business affairs with a fair degree of success, and I am also beginning to be respected by my neighbours; and both these circumstances afford me a considerable amount of satisfaction. True, I daily come in contact with many citizens who are much wealthier and more widely respected than I am; but I flatter myself that a time will come when I shall overtake and possibly outstrip them in both these respects. This aspect of my life, then, is very satisfactory. With respect to my marriage, to be frank with you,

I fear I cannot say quite as much. I will go a step further, and confess that that union, which was to have conferred joy and happiness upon me, has disappointed me; and that the pleasure I experienced from it in the beginning has ever since been on the wane, and that now, in lieu of married bliss, I am face to face with misery. My wife is handsome, intelligent, good-natured, accomplished. At first she made me indescribably happy. But at present numerous causes of disagreement are ever cropping up between us—you cannot understand this, not being married yourself—now because she seeks my caresses when I am cold and indifferent to her, now because the *rôles* are changed and my temporary indifference has passed over to her. Love, moreover, needs the charm of novelty to feed it. A woman much less

attractive than my wife exercises at first a much greater fascination over me than she does, and then again grows far more insipid than even my wife. I have felt this more than once. No; honestly, I may say that I have not found what I hoped for in marriage. The philosophers, my friend, are right; life never gives all that the soul longs for. I have verified the truth of this in marriage. But the circumstance that life withholds from us the happiness which the human soul yearns for, is by no means a proof that your deceitful system supplies it," he concluded, with a laugh.

"Why deceitful?" asked Pamphilius. "In what do you detect symptoms of fraud?"

"Your deception consists in this: that in order to deliver mankind from the calamities that are inseparable from the affairs of

life, you repudiate all the affairs of life, nay, life itself. In order to spare men the pain of disillusion, you cause them to eschew all illusions, you repudiate—even marriage."

"We do no such thing!" protested Pamphilius.

"If it is not marriage that you repudiate, then it is love."

"Love!" exclaimed Pamphilius, "why we abjure everything except love. Love with us is the corner-stone of the whole edifice."

"I do not understand you, then," said Julius. "Judging by what I have heard from others, and I may add by your own example—for although you and I are of the same age, you are still unmarried—I gather that you Christians have no conjugal union. You do not sever the marriage ties which you have already

contracted, but you make no new ones. You take no thought for the perpetuation of the human race, and if the earth were peopled with none but Christians, humanity would soon cease to exist," exclaimed Julius, echoing an assertion which he had heard many times before.

"That is scarcely a fair way of stating the facts, is it?" replied Pamphilius; "it is true that we do not deliberately make it our aim to perpetuate the human race, nor do we take the matter so very much to heart, as I have often heard it remarked by some of your wise men. Our minds are set at rest on the subject by our firm belief that our Father, who vigilantly watches over mankind, is mindful of all their wants; it is our object to live in accordance with His will. If He wills it that the human race should subsist, He

will likewise find the means of perpetuating it; if not, it will inevitably come to an end. That, however, is no care of ours, our task is the more modest one of living according to His will. His will is manifested in us both in our own nature and in the revelation He has vouchsafed to give us, which says that a man shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Marriage is not only not forbidden by our laws, but is directly encouraged by our Elders, who are learned in the law. The main difference between your marriage and ours consists in the revelation given to us from on high that every lustful glance at a woman is sinful, and the practical results which our belief in that revelation has produced, and which may be summed up as follows: we and our women, instead of leaving no means untried to dress finely

and beautify ourselves for the purpose of kindling carnal desires in the hearts of those who look upon us, direct all our efforts to the stifling of all such impure movements, so that the sentiment of love among us, as among brothers and sisters, should be strong enough to outweigh the feeling of lust for one woman to which you give the name of love.'

"All that is well and good," remarked Julius, "but surely you cannot stifle the feeling of pleasure and love that springs up within us when we look upon the beautiful. Not to wander far afield for an instant, I am satisfied that that pretty girl with whom you brought the grapes, in spite of her attire, which works wonders in the way of hiding her charms, kindles in your breast the sentiment of love for woman."

"I do not think that that is so," said Pamphilius, blushing. "I never thought of her beauty. You are the first who has suggested such a thing. She is but a sister to me. But to come back to what I was saying about the difference between marriage with you and with us; it arises, as I was remarking, from the circumstance that with you carnal lust, under the name of beauty, love, service of the goddess Venus, is deliberately provoked and maintained; whereas with us, on the contrary, it is avoided, not because we hold it to be an evil (God has created no evil)—indeed, we esteem it a positive good—but because it can and does become an evil, a temptation, as we call it, when not confined to its proper place. Now we strain every nerve to avoid this. And that is the reason why I am not married yet, although I know of

nothing to prevent me from taking a wife to-morrow."

"And what will determine your choice?"

"The will of God."

"How do you discover it?"

"If you never look for its manifestations you will never find them. If you are continually on the watch for them they become visible and clear, as clear as divination by sacrifices or by the flight of birds is to you. As you have wise men among you who interpret to you the will of your gods by the light of their own knowledge and signs they discern in the entrails of the victim or the flight of birds, in like manner we, too, have our wise men—Elders—who make known to us the will of our Father, by means of the Christ's revelation, the promptings of their heart and the thoughts of others, and more than anything else by

the love they cherish for their fellow-man."

"All that is much too vague," objected Julius. "Who is to tell you, for example, when and whom you should marry? Now, when the time came for me to marry, I had the choice of three girls. These possible wives were selected from among all the others by reason of their uncommon beauty and great wealth, and my father consented in advance to my marriage with any one of the three. It was from these three that I selected my Eulalia, because she was the prettiest and, in my eyes, the most fascinating. All that was quite natural. But who will guide your choice?"

"Before giving a direct reply to your question," said Pamphilius, "let me first tell you that in our religion all men are

equal in the eyes of our Father, so they are equal in our eyes also, both in respect of their position and in regard to their physical and moral qualities. It follows from this that our choice (if I must employ a word which for us has no meaning) is not, and cannot be, in any way circumscribed. Any human being living on this earth can become the husband or wife of a Christian."

"That makes it all the more difficult to fix one's choice," said Julius.

"Let me tell you what one of our Elders remarked to me the other day on the difference between Christian and Pagan marriages," replied Pamphilius. "The Pagan chooses that girl of all others who, to his thinking, is qualified to yield him the highest degree and greatest variety of enjoyment. The effect of this condition is

to make him dart his eyes with lightning rapidity from one to another, irresolute which to choose; for what makes it the more difficult to come to a decision is that the enjoyment in question is an unknown quantity veiled in the shadowy future. A Christian, on the other hand, is not embarrassed by the element of personal choice, or rather considerations of a purely personal nature occupy a secondary instead of the foremost place. His one absorbing care is, not by his marriage to run counter to the will of God."

"But how is it possible to oppose God's will by a marriage?"

"If I were to forget the Iliad," replied Pamphilius, "that you and I were wont to study and read aloud together in bygone times, there would be little to wonder at, and nothing to censure. But if you forget

it, who live in the midst of philosophers and poets, you cannot plead the same justification. Now, what else is the Iliad but the story of the transgression of the will of God by a marriage? And Menelaus and Paris, and Helen and Achilles, and Agamemnon and Chryseis, are all elements of a description of the terrible calamities that overtook, and do nowadays still overtake, people who oppose their will to that of God in this matter of marriage."

"In what does this opposition consist?"

"In the fact that what a man loves in a woman is not a fellow-creature like himself, but the personal enjoyment which his union with her will bring him, and for the purpose of procuring this pleasure he contracts marriage. A Christian marriage is not possible unless a man is inspired by

love for his fellow-creatures, and the person whom he takes for partner must, in the first place, be the object of this brotherly affection of man for his fellow. As it is out of the question to build a house unless a foundation has been laid, or to paint a picture unless you have first prepared the canvas or other material upon which you propose to paint it, so carnal love can never be lawful, reasonable, or enduring unless it is raised upon a structure of love and reverence of man for man. Only on this basis is it possible to establish a wise Christian family life."

"Still it is not, I confess, quite clear to my mind why the marriage you term Christian should exclude that species of love for womankind which Paris felt."

"I do not suggest that Christian marriage does not admit exclusive love for one

woman; on the contrary, it is judicious and holy only when such love is one of its elements. But what I should like to bring out with a degree of clearness equal to the importance of the point is, that real exclusive love for a woman is possible only when the more general love for all mankind is respected and maintained intact. That description of exclusive love for a woman which the poets sing and proclaim excellent in itself, although not founded upon the love of man for his fellows, does not deserve the name of love. It is animal lust, which very often loses itself in hatred. The best proof of my thesis that what is usually termed love—Eros—changes to beastliness when not resting on the broad basis of brotherly affection for all men, is the case in which violence is employed against the very woman whom the ravisher

professes to love, even while causing her pain that will retain its sting as long as life endures. Can a man be said to cherish affection for a person whom he thus tortures? Now, in Pagan marriages one frequently finds cases of masked violence; when a man marries a girl who either simply does not love him in return or loves another, and ruthlessly inflicts pain and suffering upon her, simply that he may appease the brutal appetite which is misnamed love."

"I grant all that," interrupted Julius; "but am I to take it that, if the girl does love him, it follows that there is no injustice in the matter. If so, I do not see in what respect a Christian union differs from a Pagan marriage."

"I am not acquainted with the details of your own marriage," replied Pamphilius;

"but it is perfectly obvious to me that every marriage, wherever and whenever contracted, at the root of which lies mere personal enjoyment, cannot but prove an abundant source of discord, just as the process of feeding cannot take place among animals, or among human beings who are but little removed from the mere animal stage, without breeding quarrels and fights —each one is eager to seize upon a tit-bit; and, as there are not enough such delicious morsels for them all, the result is a scramble and fight. If the quarrel does not actually break out into active hostilities, it is none the less real for being latent. The weak individual longs for the luscious morsel, conscious though he is that his more powerful neighbour will never cede it to him, and, although he discerns the impossibility of snatching it from his rival by force, still he

eyes him with secret envious hatred, and is ever ready to profit by any favourable opportunity that offers to deprive him of it. It is just the same with Pagan marriages—only that the results are far worse in degree, owing to the circumstance that the coveted object is a human being, and so discord and hatred are engendered between the spouses themselves."

"And how do you propose to compel the intending spouses to love each other and no one else besides? In every case the young girl or the young man will be found to love some one else, in which case, according to you, marriage is impossible. From this I clearly perceive that the people who maintain that you Christians do not marry at all, are quite right. This is also the reason why you are single, and will probably ever remain so. For how is it

conceivable that a man who marries a girl should have never previously inflamed the heart of any other woman, or that a girl should have reached the age of maturity without having ever awakened the feeling of love in the breast of any man? What do you suggest that Helen should have done?"

"Our Elder, Cyril, speaking once of this matter, remarked that people in the Pagan world, without spending even a passing thought upon their duty of loving their fellow-men, without having ever done anything to educate such a feeling, are solicitous about one thing only: how to excite in their own breasts a passionate love for woman; and they leave nothing undone to foster this passion. It is for this reason that in their world every Helen or Helen-like woman arouses the love of many men.

The rivals fight with each other and strain every nerve to excel each other, just like brutes eager to win the female. And to a greater or lesser extent their marriage is a struggle—a form of violence. In our community we not only never think of personal enjoyment of beauty, but we sedulously avoid all those seductive contrivances and artifices likely to act as temptations thereto, which the Pagan world has raised almost to the dignity of apotheosis. We fix our thoughts upon the obligation we are under to reverence and love our neighbour—comprising in this term all men, whether they happen to be of unsurpassing beauty or of repulsive ugliness. We do our best to educate that sentiment, and this is why with us love for our fellow-men gets the upper hand over the seductions of beauty, conquers them, and removes all pretexts

for quarrels and feuds that have their source in the relations of the sexes.

"A Christian contracts marriage only when his union with the woman, between whom and himself there is a bond of mutual affection, causes bitterness to no one. Cyril goes even so far as to say that a Christian will not even feel an attachment for a woman unless he knows that his marriage with her will not cause a feeling of pain to any one."

"But is such a thing conceivable?" objected Julius. "Is a man then the master of his likes and dislikes?"

"Not if he have already given them loose rein; but he can avoid arousing them and arrest their development. Take as a case in point the relations of fathers to their daughters, mothers to their sons, brothers to their sisters. A mother, daughter,

or sister, how beautiful soever she may be, is never conceived of as an object of personal enjoyment by her son, her father, or her brother, and so the coarse animal feelings are not awakened. They would be aroused in such a case, if the man discovered that his supposed daughter, mother, or sister was no relation whatever; but even then the sentiment in question would be feeble, easily amenable to reason, and it would cost the man but little effort to curb or wholly suppress it. The reason why the coarse carnal feeling would be weak is because there would lie at its root a sentiment of filial, paternal, or brotherly love. Why do you persist in doubting that it is possible and even easy to evoke and educate in man exactly such a sentiment towards all women as is actually entertained towards mothers, daughters, and

sisters, and to cause the feeling of conjugal love to flourish on this basis? As a young man will not allow himself to cherish anything like sexual affection for the young girl whom he looked upon as his sister, until he is perfectly satisfied that she is not his sister, so a Christian refuses to entertain a similar feeling for any woman whatever, until he knows that such love for her on his part will cause no one pain or displeasure."

"But how if two men fall in love with the same girl?"

"One of them will sacrifice his love for the happiness of the other."

"But suppose she herself loves one of them?"

"Then he whom she loves less will sacrifice his love for her happiness."

"Well, but if she loves the two, and both

insist on sacrificing their sentiments, she will not marry either, I take it?"

"In a case of that kind the Elders would weigh the matter well, and advise the parties to take a course that would result in the greatest amount of happiness for all concerned, combined with the greatest amount of love."

"But that is not the course usually taken, and the reason is that it is contrary to human nature."

"Human nature! Which human nature? Besides being an animal, a man is, I presume, likewise a man, and if the relations to woman which our Christian religion advocates are not in harmony wit h man's animal nature, they are in perfect accordance with his rational nature. And when he makes his reason the handmaid of his animal nature, he falls lower in the scale of

God's creatures than the very brutes; he descends to violence, to incest, to which no animal sinks. But when he employs his rational nature to curb his animal instincts, when the latter are forced into the service of the former, then, and only then, does he obtain that happiness which alone is capable of satisfying his yearnings."

CHAPTER V.

"But now let me hear what you have to tell me about yourself. I noticed you in the street with a beautiful girl, with whom, if I may judge by appearances, you live together in that town of yours. Now tell me, can it be possible that you have no desire to become her husband?"

"I have never given the subject any serious consideration," replied Pamphilius. "She is the daughter of a Christian widow to whom I render what services I can, just as others do besides myself. I serve the mother as I do the daughter, and I love both equally well. You wish to know

whether the love I feel for her is of a nature to justify my marrying her? The question is a painful one for me; but I will give you a straightforward answer. The idea has, I confess, occurred to me; but there is a youth of my acquaintance who also loves her, and that is why I have never yet seriously entertained it. He, too, is a Christian, and he loves us both dearly, and I could not for a moment think of doing anything that might give him pain. So I live on without giving these ideas any place in my thoughts. All my desires are centred in one aim—to fulfil the law of love—love for our fellow-men. That is the one thing necessary. As for wedlock, I shall marry when I am convinced that it is my duty to do so."

"Those are your ideas; but the mother's standpoint may be different. It cannot

surely be immaterial to her whether she gets a son-in-law who is kind and industrious, or one who is the reverse. She will be naturally desirous of having you for such a near relation."

"By no means. It is perfectly indifferent to her; because she is well aware that all our brethren are to the full as willing as I am to serve her just as we are to be useful to every other brother and sister; and that I shall continue to do what I can for her in exactly the same way whether I do or do not become her son-in-law. If the outcome of it all should be my marriage with her daughter, I shall welcome such a consummation with joy—just as I should her marriage with somebody else."

"No, no; what you are saying now is utterly impossible. And herein lies the

most terrible thing I have observed in you Christians—that you so completely deceive yourselves! And in this way you deceive others as well. That stranger whom I told you about a few minutes ago was right in what he asserted about you. While listening to your glowing descriptions I involuntarily succumb to the spell of the charming life which you depict, but when I think it carefully over, I see that it is all deception—and a deception which leads to savagery, to brutality, to a life approaching that of the beasts."

"In what do you discern this savagery?"

"In the circumstance that as you work to earn a livelihood, you have no leisure or opportunity to devote yourselves to science and art. Here are you, for instance, attired in a ragged garment, with rough, horny hands and feet, while your

mate, who might well be a goddess of beauty, is as like a slave as a freewoman could be. You Christians have no hymns of Apollo, no temples, no poetry, no games —in a word, nothing of all those gifts of the gods to man which adorn life and make it beautiful. To grind, grind, and grind, like slaves or oxen, merely in order to support yourself on the coarsest of food —what else is that but voluntary and impious renunciation of the human will and nature."

"There it is again," exclaimed Pamphilius, "that tiresome human nature! In what does this nature consist, pray? Is it in torturing slaves with work beyond their strength, in the butchering of one's brothers or reducing them to slavery; or is it in transforming woman from what she was and is into an object of amusement? . . . .

And yet all this alone beseems human nature. Is that the essence of human nature, or does it not rather consist in living in love and fellowship with all men, and feeling oneself a member of one universal brotherhood?

"You, too, are grievously mistaken, if you imagine that we refuse to recognise science and arts. We highly appreciate all the gifts and talents with which human nature is endowed.

"We look upon all men's inborn capacities as means given to assist him to attain one sole end, to the realisation of which our whole life is devoted, and that is the fulfilment of the will of God. In science and arts we discern, not a vulgar pastime fit only to give transient pleasure to idle people, but serious avocations of which we have a right to demand what we require of

all human callings—namely, that in pursuing them, the same active love of God and of one's fellow-man be made manifest which permeates all the acts of a Christian. We do not recognise as true science anything so called which fails to help us to live better; neither do we value art but that which purifies our thoughts and projects, raises up the soul, and increases the forces necessary to a life of labour and of love. We lose no opportunity to develop, as far as is possible, knowledge of this kind in ourselves and in our children; and the charms of such art we feel and delight in during our leisure moments. We read and study the writings bequeathed to us by the wisdom of men who lived before us; we chant songs, we paint pictures, and our songs and our pictures comfort us, cheer us up in moments of sadness. Therefore it is

that we cannot bring ourselves to approve the way in which you Pagans apply the arts and sciences. Your scholars employ their natural capacities and acquired knowledge to invent new ways of working evil to others; they are always busy making the methods of war more effective, more deadly —that is to say, they are engaged in making murder easier; they are ever concocting new schemes for earning money—that is, for enriching some persons at the expense of others. Your art is utilised for the building and ornamentation of temples in honour of gods in whom the most enlightened among you have long since ceased to believe, but faith in whom you try to keep alive in others, in the hope that by means of this fraud it will be all the more easy for you to keep them well in hand. Your statues are raised to the strongest

and most cruel of your tyrants, whom no one esteems, but all fear. In the plays given in your theatres, criminal love is lauded and applauded. Music among you is degraded to the *rôle* of a means of tickling the senses of rich gluttons, after they have gorged themselves to satiety on the meats and drinks of their luxurious banquets. The highest use of which painting is put is to depict in houses of ill-fame scenes at which no man can glance without blushing, whose senses are not paralysed by the fumes of wine or blunted by beastly passion.

"No, it is not for such purposes that man is endowed with those higher attributes which distinguish him from the beasts of the field. They were not given to be turned into a plaything for the delectation of our bodies. By consecrating our whole

life to the fulfilment of God's will, we are employing, and employing to the highest purpose, all those nobler gifts and faculties which we have received from God."

"Yes," Julius answered, "all that would be sublime, if only life were possible under such conditions. But one cannot live so. You are only deluding yourselves. You refuse to acknowledge our protection, but if it were not for the Roman legions, could you live peaceably? You enjoy the protection which you refuse to acknowledge. Even certain members of your own community—you yourself told me—defended themselves. You do not recognise property, and yet you enjoy it; your brethren own property and give it to you; you yourself take care not to give away for nothing the grapes you carry; you sell them, and you will also in turn make purchases. Now all

this is a delusion. If you carried out what you say to the letter, then I should understand your position; but as it is, you are deceiving others and yourselves to boot."

Julius waxed hot during the conversation, and gave expression to every thought that flitted through his mind. Pamphilius remained silent, awaiting the end. When Julius ceased speaking, he said:

"You are in error when you say that we enjoy without recognising the protection you afford us. We have no need of Roman legions, because we attach no importance whatever to those things which require to be protected by violence. Our happiness is centred in that which needs no defence, and which no man can take away from us. If material objects which you regard as personal property pass through our hands, it should be borne in

mind that we do not look upon them or treat them as our own, we hand them over to those for whose support they are necessary. It is true that we sell grapes, but not for profit; only in order to obtain the necessaries of life for those who are in need of them. If any one wanted to take those grapes from us, we should give them up without the slightest resistance. For the same reason we have nothing to fear from an invasion of barbarians. If they wanted to deprive us of the products of our labour, we should yield them up at once; if they insisted on our working for them, this also we should do with joy; and not only would the barbarians have no cause to kill us, but it would be detrimental to what they consider their own interests to do so. They would soon get to understand us, would even grow to love us, and we should have

less to suffer from them than we now have to endure from the enlightened people in whose midst we live and by whom we are persecuted.

"It has been frequently urged by you and yours that it is only in consequence of the rights of property being respected that one is enabled to obtain all those articles of food and clothing with which people are nourished and kept alive. But weigh the matter well, and then decide for yourself —by whom are all these necessaries of life really produced? By whose labour are those riches stored up and accumulated of which you are so proud? Is it by those who, sitting comfortably with folded arms, command their slaves and mercenaries to go hither and thither—to do this and that, and who alone possess property to enjoy; or is it not rather by those poor neces-

sitous workmen who, to earn a crust of bread, carry out their lord's commands, while they themselves are deprived of all property, and scarcely receive for their share enough to keep them alive for a single day? And what grounds have you for supposing that these workmen who are so lavish of their strength and energy now, when it is a question of executing orders which they frequently do not even understand, will give up every kind of exertion the moment it is made possible for them to undertake intelligible and moderate work, the results of which will benefit themselves and those whom they love and pity?

"The accusations you launch against us are mainly these: that we do not completely attain the end which we have in view, and that we actually deceive others

when we say that we do not recognise violence, nor property, seeing that we enjoy the results of both. Now, if we are deceivers, it is useless to waste words upon us; we are fit objects not for anger or for accusation, but for scorn. And the scorn we joyfully accept, because it is one of our rules to contemn our own nothingness. But if we sincerely and earnestly strive to reach the end towards which we profess to be directing all our efforts, then your accusations would be purely unjust. If we aspire to strive, as my brethren and myself do, to live, in accordance with the law laid down by our Master, without violence or property, which is none of its fruits, our object in doing so obviously cannot be the attainment of material ends, the acquisition of riches, power, honours—for we gain none of these things thereby—

but something wholly different. We are quite as keen as you Pagans are in the search of happiness; the only difference between us consisting in the opposite views we take of what constitutes it. You place it in riches, honours; we in something very different. Our faith tells us that bliss is to be found not in violence, but in submission; not in riches, but in giving everything away. And even as the flowers struggle upwards towards the light, so do we move outwards towards what we see to be our happiness. We do not carry out everything that we should like to do for the attainment of our happiness—that is to say, we have not quite succeeded in casting off every habit of violence and property. This is true. But could it well be otherwise? Take yourself, for instance: you strain every nerve to obtain the prettiest

wife, to acquire the largest fortune; but do you, does any one, succeed in this? If an archer does not hit the target, will he, because he has missed it many times in succession, cease altogether to aim at it? We are in exactly the same position. Our happiness is, according to Christ's teaching, in love; but love excludes violence, and property which flows from violence. We are all of us bent on seeking our happiness, but we do not fully succeed; moreover, we do not all set about it in precisely the same way, nor do we all attain it to the same extent."

"Yes, but why do you refuse to listen to the accumulated wisdom of mankind, why do you turn away from it and give ear only to your own crucified Master? Your thraldom, your servile submission to him is precisely what most of all repels us in you."

"You are again mistaken, as are all those who imagine that while professing the teachings which we do, we believe in them only because the man in whom we trust commanded us to do so. On the contrary, all those who with their whole soul seek for knowledge of the truth, for communion with the Father, all who yearn for true happiness, involuntarily, and without conscious effort, find themselves travelling along the same road that Christ traversed, and, instinctively taking their stand behind him, are soon aware that he is leading the way. All who love God will converge towards, and finally meet, on this road—yourself among the number. He is the Son of God, the mediator between God and man; it is not that we have been told this by some one and therefore blindly believe it, but we hold it

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to be true because all those who seek God find His Son before them, and only through the Son do they understand, see, and know God."

Julius made no reply, and they both sat for a considerable time in unbroken silence.

"Are you happy?" he asked at length.

"I desire nothing better than what I have and am. Nor is this all. I am continually experiencing a feeling of perplexity, a dim consciousness of injustice somewhere. Why is it that I am so unspeakably happy?" exclaimed Pamphilius with a smile.

"Yes," sighed Julius; "it may be that I too should have been happy, happier than I am, had I not met the stranger I told you of, and had I gone over to you."

"If you think so, what is keeping you back?'

"How about my wife?"

"You say that she has a leaning towards Christianity; if so, she will join us along with you."

"True; but we have only just begun a different kind of life; would it be wise to break it up thus suddenly? We have begun it now, and we had better live it out to the end," said Julius, vividly picturing to himself the disappointment of his father, his mother, his friends, if he were to become a Christian; but more vividly still the continuous and painful effort it would cost him to effect this revolution.

At this moment the young girl, Pamphilius' friend, accompanied by a youth, came up to the shop-door. Pamphilius went out to them, and the youth told him, in the presence of Julius, that he had been sent by Cyril to buy some

leather. The grapes were already sold, and wheat purchased with the money received. Pamphilius proposed that the youth should return home along with Magdalen, bringing the wheat with them, and undertaking himself to buy the leather and carry it home.

"It will be better for you," he urged.

"No, it is better for Magdalen that you should go with her," the youth answered, and went away. Julius accompanied his friend to the stores of a merchant with whom he was acquainted, where Pamphilius filled the sacks with wheat, handed a small portion to Magdalen, slung his own heavy burden over his shoulders, said good-bye to his friend, and, walking side by side with the young girl, left the city.

At a bend in the street, Pamphilius looked back and smilingly nodded to Julius,

and then smiling still more joyfully, made some remark to Magdalen as they disappeared from Julius' horizon.

"Yes, it would indeed have been better for me had I then gone over to the Christians," exclaimed Julius to himself. And in his imagination arose two pictures which kept alternating with each other: now he beheld the robust Pamphilius, with the tall, strong girl, carrying baskets on their heads, their faces radiant with kindliness and joy; now he saw his own domestic hearth, which he had quitted that morning, and to which he would return that night—and his pampered, pretty wife, whose charms had already begun to pall upon him, decked out in fine apparel, adorned with wristbands, and lolling on rich carpets and soft yielding cushions.

But Julius had little time for thinking

he was accosted first by some merchants who had come to see him, then by comrades, and they entered at once upon the usual occupations, which wound up with dinner and drinking, and at night with his wife.

CHAPTER VI.

TEN years passed away; and during all that time Julius never once came across his friend. He thought less and less frequently of their former meetings and discussions, and the impressions they had created in his mind respecting Pamphilius himself, and the life of the Christians generally, grew gradually dimmer and dimmer, till at last they seemed to have faded away. Julius' own life ran in the common groove. His father had died, and he had taken over the entire business of the firm—a very complicated concern, with its old customers, its salesmen in Africa,

its clerks at home, its debts to be collected and debts to be paid. Julius was engrossed by affairs in spite of himself, and gave up all his time to them. Besides, he had the new cares of his wife to bear. Then, again, he was elected to discharge the duties of a civic office; and this new occupation, flattering his self-love, delighted him. From that time forward, in addition to his business affairs, he turned his attention to public matters; and, being a man of parts, and endowed with the gift of flowing, facile speech, he began to make his mark among his fellow-citizens, and bade fair to rise in time to the highest civic honours in his native place.

Those ten years had likewise wrought considerable changes in the sphere of his family life—changes which to him at least were highly distasteful. He was now the

father of three children, and one of the effects of their birth was to estrange him still more from their mother. In the first place, his wife had lost much of her former freshness and beauty; and, in the next place, she had grown less solicitous about her husband than of yore, all her tenderness and caresses being lavished upon her offspring. Although the children were confided to the care of wet nurses and dry nurses, as was the custom of the Pagans, Julius often found them in their mother's apartments, or, having looked for her there in vain, discovered her in her children's room. For the most part Julius looked upon his children as an irksome burden—a source of trouble and vexation rather than pleasure. Absorbed in private and municipal affairs, Julius had given up his former dissolute life; but he considered

that he stood in need of elegant repose after his day's labours, and this he no longer found in the society of his wife, especially as her intercourse with her female slave—a Christian—grew more and more intimate, and she allowed herself to be carried away by the charm of the new doctrine to such an extent that she discarded from her life all the outward gloss and varnish of Paganism, by which Julius set such store. Not finding in his wife's society what he sought there, Julius cultivated the friendship of a woman of light conduct, in whose company he spent those leisure moments which remained to him after the day's duties were discharged. If you had asked him whether he was happy during those years of his life, he would have been at a loss what to answer, so numerous and absorbing were his occupa-

tions. From one business matter and pleasure he rushed rapidly onwards to another; but not one of them was of a nature thoroughly to satisfy his yearnings, of not one of them could he truly say that he desired it to last. Every serious affair he took in hand was such that the sooner he accomplished it, and had done with it, the easier he felt in mind, and there was not one of his pleasures which was not poisoned by something or other, not one free from the loathing that comes of satiety.

In this wise the stream of Julius' life rolled smoothly on, till one day an untoward event took place which nearly changed its whole course. He was taking part in the Olympian games, and was guiding his chariot successfully towards the goal, putting forth all his energies to outstrip another chariot that was slightly ahead of

his, when he dashed up against it. One of the wheels of his chariot snapped in two; he was thrown violently out, breaking two ribs and his right arm. The injuries he sustained were very severe, but not mortal; he was conveyed to his house, and was confined to his bed for three months.

During these three months of intense physical pain, his mind became unusually active; he employed his enforced leisure in meditating upon his life, which he contemplated from a purely objective point of view, as if it were the life of a perfect stranger.

And his past life appeared to him in an unpleasant light, which was intensified by the occurrence just then of three disagreeable events, which occasioned him no inconsiderable pain. The first of these was the dishonesty of an old and trusted slave,

who had loyally served Julius' father for many years past, but now suddenly absconded with a heap of precious stones which he had received in Africa for his master's firm, thus inflicting heavy losses on Julius, and throwing his affairs into disorder. The second blow was the inconstancy of his concubine, who unceremoniously left him, and chose another protector for herself. The third and most painful stroke of all was the election of his rival to the high post of director, for which he himself was a candidate; the public elections took place during his illness, and he was rejected. All these reverses, Julius was convinced, were the outcome of his illness, which in turn resulted from his chariot having moved just half an inch too much to the left. Lying thus helpless in bed, his thoughts involuntarily turned on

the trifling casualties on which his happiness depended, and then dwelt on the remembrance of his previous misfortunes, his attempt to become a Christian, and on Pamphilius, whom he had not seen for ten years. These recollections were refreshed by the conversations he had with his wife, who, now that he was suffering and in bed, used to pass the greater part of her time with him, telling him everything she had learned from her female slave about Christianity. This slave had lived for a time in the very community in which Pamphilius resided, and was personally acquainted with him. Julius, on learning this, expressed a wish to see her, and when she drew near his couch, questioned her in great detail concerning the life led by the Christians, and about Pamphilius in particular.

Pamphilius, she told him, was one of the best members of the brotherhood, and was beloved and esteemed by all; he was married to that same Magdalen with whom Julius had seen him ten years before, and he was now the father of several children, "Yes," concluded the slave, "those who doubt that God created men for their happiness, should pay a visit to that community and look upon Pamphilius and Magdalen."

Julius dismissed the slave and remained alone, pondering upon the significance of what he had heard. He was smitten by a feeling of envy, whenever he compared Pamphilius' life with his own, and he resolved to drive such thoughts away. In order to distract himself somewhat he took up a Greek manuscript which his wife had left for him to peruse, and read the following:

"There are two ways: leading the one to life, the other to death. The way of life is this: in the first place you must love God who created you, and in the second place love your neighbour as yourself; and do not unto another that which you would not wish done to yourself. Now the teaching implied in these words may be expressed thus: Bless those that curse you; pray for your enemies and fast for your persecutors, for if ye love them who love you what thank have ye, do not the heathens do even so? Love ye them that hate you and ye shall have no enemies. Flee the lusts of the flesh and the world. Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also, and thou shalt be perfect. Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. If any man take away

thy coat, let him have thy shirt also. If any man take what is thine, seek not to have it back, for this thou canst not. Give unto every one that asketh and demand not back what once thou hast given; for the Father willeth that his beneficent gifts be bestowed upon all. Blessed is he who giveth according to the commandment. . . .

"The second precept of the Teaching: Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not commit fornication; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not use enchantment; thou shalt not poison; thou shalt not covet what belongs to thy neighbour. Thou shalt not swear, thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not speak ill of any one; thou shalt not remember evil. Be not double-minded; be not double-tongued. . . . Let not thy word be false, nor vain, but let it be true

to the deed. Be not greedy of gain, be not rapacious, nor a hypocrite, nor malicious, nor puffed up. Do not design evil plans against your neighbour. Do not foster hatred towards any man, but admonish some, pray for others, and love others more than thou lovest thine own soul.

"My child, flee evil of every kind and everything akin to evil. Be not angry, because anger leads up to murder; nor jealous, nor quarrelsome, nor hot-tempered; for the outcome of all these is murder. Be not lustful, my son, for lust leads up to fornication; use not loose words in thy conversation, for the result thereof is adultery. My son, do not practise sorcery, cast not spells, pronounce no charms, and flee those who do such things, for they are idolatry. My son be not mendacious, for lying is the road to robbery; be not

greedy of silver, nor of honours, for robbery comes of these. Be not querulous, my son, for this is the road to blasphemy; nor insolent, nor evil-minded, for blasphemy is the fruit of all these. But be meek, for the meek shall inherit the earth. Be patient and kindly and forgiving, and lowly and good. . . . Exalt not thyself, and frequent not the proud, but converse with the righteous and the humble. Whatsoever happeneth to thee welcome as a blessing, knowing that nothing happens against God's will. . . . My son, foment not divisions, but make peace between those who have quarrelled. . . . Open not wide thy palms to receive, nor narrow them when giving. Do not shrink from giving away, and, having given, murmur not; for thou shalt know who is the good Dispenser of rewards. Turn not away thy face from the

needy, but share all things with thy brother; call nothing thine own, for, if ye are sharers and co-partners in the incorruptible, how much more in what is perishable. Teach thy children from their tender years to fear God. Command not thy servants or thy slaves in anger, lest they should not cease to fear God who rules over you both; for He cometh not to call people according to their looks, but He calls those whom the spirit has prepared. . . .

"And the way of death is this: first of all it is evil and full of curses; and there is murder upon it and adultery, lust, fornication, robbery, idolatry, sorcery, poisoning, rapacity, false witness, hypocrisy, double dealing, cunning, pride, malice, haughtiness, greed, foul language, envy, insolence, arrogance, boastfulness; here are to be found the persecutors of the just, the haters

of truth and lovers of lies, they who deny that there will be a reward for the just, they who hold aloof from what is right and from the just judgment; those who are wakeful not for righteous but for evil purposes, who are strangers to meekness and to patience; here are they who delight in vanity and follow after rewards, who feel no pity for the poor, and have no compassion for those who are crushed with toil, who know not their Creator; the murderers of children, destroyers of that which God hath fashioned, those who turn away from the needy, who trample on the oppressed, defenders of the rich, unjust judges of the poor, sinners in all things. Be on your guard, my children, with all such persons."

Long before he had read the manuscript through, he felt himself in the position in which many persons find themselves when

they read a book—that is to say, other people's thoughts, with a sincere desire of seeking for truth: their souls enter into communion with those who suggested the thoughts. He kept on reading, divining beforehand what was to follow, and not only assenting to the ideas put forward, but himself, as it were, giving them expression.

There then occurred to him something so usual, and seemingly so commonplace, that it generally escapes our notice, and is yet one of the most mysterious, most momentous phenomena of our lives; it consists in the circumstance that a so-called living man becomes truly alive when he enters into communion, unites himself with the so-called dead, living one life with them. Julius' soul merged itself in those of the writers of these thoughts, and after this intimate communion he contemplated

himself, surveyed his own life. And he himself, and his whole life, seemed to him a terrible mistake. He had not lived; but he had, by all his cares and anxieties about life, and all the temptations he had succumbed to, destroyed the very possibility of true life.

"I do not wish to trample upon and quench my life," he exclaimed to himself; "I wish to live, to take the road that leads to life."

All that Pamphilius had told him in their former conversations rose up before him now with the vividness and force of ten years before; and it all seemed so clear and obvious, that he was astonished that he could have given heed to the words of the stranger and foregone his intention of becoming a Christian. One piece of advice which the stranger had given him

also recurred to him: "*When you have tasted life, then, if you will, go over to the Christians.*"

"I have tasted life," he said to himself, "and have found it void of attraction, void of substance." He likewise called to mind Pamphilius' promise that, whenever he came to the Christians, he would be sure of a cordial reception. "Enough," he exclaimed, "I have erred and suffered long enough; I will now leave everything and become a Christian, and live according to the rules laid down here." He informed his wife of his intention; and she was delighted to hear of it.

His wife was ready to follow him in all this. The only question now was how to set about executing his plan. What was to be done with the children? Should they, too, be taken and baptised or left behind

with their Pagan grandmother? Would it be advisable, would it be humane to make them Christians and thus expose them, after years of comfort and luxury, to all the hardships and privations in which the members of this sect delighted? The female slave offered to go with them and watch over them as Christians. But the mother's heart would not allow her to consent to this. She insisted on leaving them with their grandmother. Julius' approval of this arrangement removed the only serious obstacle in the way; and, this satisfactorily disposed of, the remaining preparations were at once begun by Julius and his wife for taking the most momentous step in their lives.

CHAPTER VII.

At last all the preparations were concluded and everything finally settled, the only remaining difficulty being Julius' health—his wounds had not yet healed—which compelled him to put off for a few days, or it might be weeks, the last formal act that would sever the ties that bound him to the religion, traditions, and ways of thinking of his fathers, and introduce him to the new life he had chosen. One night he fell asleep in the same resolute mood as usual, and on awaking next morning was informed that a clever physician, who chanced to be passing through the town,

had expressed a desire to see him, and undertake to restore him speedily to health and strength. Julius was delighted, said he would see the physician at once, and a few moments later was exchanging salutations with the identical stranger whom he had met and discoursed with many years before on his way to the Christians.

Having carefully examined his wounds, the doctor prescribed a decoction of certain simples which he promised would fortify his patient, and hasten his recovery.

"Shall I ever be able to work with my hand?" Julius inquired.

"Oh, certainly. You will be able to drive a chariot as deftly as ever you did, and to write, too, as much as you desire."

"Yes; but I mean hard work; digging, for instance?"

"Well, I confess, I had not that kind of

work in mind," said the physician, "because a man in your position never need take to anything of that kind."

"On the contrary, that is precisely the kind of labour I shall be engaged in," replied Julius; and he thereupon told the stranger how he had scrupulously acted upon his advice and tasted life, had found all its promises deceitful, and now, full of disappointment and dissatisfaction, was firmly resolved to carry out the intention he had conceived several years before and join the Christian community.

"Well, they must have spun a very pretty web of charming falsehoods for you, have enticed you into it and hold you now nicely fastened up, if you, a man occupying such a high social position, with onerous and honourable duties and responsibilities —especially in respect to your children—

are unable to penetrate the mask and discern their errors."

"Will you kindly read this?" said Julius significantly in reply, handing him the Greek manuscript which he had himself pondered over some days before, with such wonderful results.

The physician took the scroll, and glanced at it.

"I know this fraud," he exclaimed, "the only thing that surprises me is that a man of your intellect should so easily fall into such a snare."

"I confess I do not understand you. What snare?"

"The pith and essence of the whole thing lies in one's conception of human life; and here are these sophists and rebels against men and gods declaring that one way of life leads to happiness; and defin-

ing it as a kind of life organised in such a way that all men are to be happy, that there are to be no wars, nor executions, nor poverty, nor immorality, nor quarrels, nor malice. And then they go on to affirm that all these conditions will be realised as soon as people carry out Christ's commandments not to quarrel, not to commit fornication, not to swear, not to do violence, not to egg on nation to rise up against nation. But the fact is that they are deceiving people by taking the end for the means. The real aim and object is to keep from quarrelling, from swearing, from dissoluteness, &c., and the only way of attaining it is by employing the means afforded by social life. Their way of presenting the facts is about as natural and logical as would be that of a teacher of archery who should say to his pupil : 'You

will easily hit the very centre of the target if you only let your arrow fly along in a perfectly straight line from the bow to the point to be hit.' The question is how to make the arrow fly along this perfectly straight line—that is the problem, and to re-state it is not to solve it. In archery the question is solved by fulfilling many conditions, such as having your bowstring tight, your bow elastic, your arrow straight, &c. It is even so with life. The best kind of life—which will exclude or greatly lessen quarrels, dissoluteness, murders—is also arrived at by having your bow-string tight—viz., wise rulers ; your bow elastic—viz., power invested in the authorities ; and your arrow straight—viz., the laws just and impartial. They, under pretext of organising the best way of living, demolish all that has heretofore bettered, and is still

calculated to better, human life. They acknowledge no rulers, nor authority, nor laws."

"But they maintain that without rulers, authority, and laws, human existence will be in all respects better, if only people will fulfil the law of Christ."

"Yes, but what guarantee have we that people will fulfil his law? Absolutely none. They say: 'You have tried life with authorities and laws, and it has never been anything but a failure. Try it now without authorities and laws, and you will soon see that it will become perfect. You have no right to deny this, not having put it to the test of experience.' But here the sophistry of these impious men is manifest. Speaking in this tone, are they a whit more logical than the agriculturist who should say: 'You sow the seed in the ground,

and then cover it up with earth, and yet the harvest crop falls far below what you would wish it to be. But my advice to you is—sow in the sea, and the results will be far more satisfactory. And do not attempt to meet this thesis with a bare denial; you have no right to do so, never having put it to the test of experience.'"

"Yes, there is much truth in what you say," answered Julius, beginning to falter in his resolution.

"Nor is this all," continued the physician; "let us suppose that what's absurd, nay, impossible, has come to pass; that the fundamental beliefs and practices of Christianity can in some mysterious manner be communicated to mankind, by means, say, of medicinal drops, and that suddenly all men take to fulfilling Christ's teachings—loving God and their neighbour, and obey-

ing the commandments. Even then, I submit, the way of life laid down in their books will not stand fair criticism. There will be no life; life will cease to exist. Their teacher was an unmarried tramp; his followers will be—according to our supposition—what their master was, and so will the whole world. Those who are now alive will live on, but their children will not, or certainly not more than one in ten of the children who would otherwise grow up to manhood. According to their own doctrine, the children should and would be all equal, parents not preferring their own children to those of perfect strangers. Now, how, I ask, will these children be tended, cared for, brought up and shielded from all the dangers with which life bristles, when we see now that all the passionate love which nature has planted

in the mother's breast for her own offspring is scarcely enough to preserve children from ruin and death. If children fall like grass before the scythe now that the conditions are most favourable to them, what will it be when the only feeling left to mothers will be equal pity for all children. Whose child will a woman bring up and educate? Who will sit up wakeful, night after night, with the sick, foul-smelling child, if not the mother who gave it life? Nature provided the child with a shield—motherly love; they tear it away, and put nothing in its place. Who is to teach the child, to train it, to penetrate to its very soul, and from that centre shape and mould it, if not its own father? Who will ward off dangers and suffering from it? All this is taken away by Christianity; nay, life itself—I mean the

perpetuation of the human race—is taken away."

"There, too, you are right," interrupted Julius, who was carried away by the physician's clear, business-like, eloquent way of putting things.

"No, my friend, turn away from all these wild ravings and live in accordance with the dictates of reason, especially at the present time, when such noble, momentous, and urgent duties still weigh upon you. To fulfil them is a point of honour. You have lived to enter upon this your second period of doubt, and now, if you will only march onwards, all doubt will vanish. Your first and most urgent obligation is to undertake the education of your children, whom you have hitherto sadly neglected. Your duty towards them consists in making them worthy servants of the common-

wealth. The commonwealth has conferred upon you everything you possess, and now it is your duty in return to give the commonwealth worthy servants in the persons of your children. Another obligation you are under is to serve society. Failure has embittered and disappointed you; this, however, is but a passing accident. Nothing worth having is ever acquired except at the cost of efforts and struggles; and it is only the hard-won victory that brings the joy of triumph. Leave it to your wife to amuse herself with the idle gossip of Christian writers; it is your duty to be a man and to make men of your children. Begin this work with the consciousness that you are performing your duty, and all your doubts will vanish into air, for they are but the symptoms and results of your morbid state. Discharge your obligations to the

commonwealth by faithfully serving it, and by training up your children to serve it; make them independent, self-sacrificing, fit and worthy to take your place, and, having done so, test, if you will, the life that so attracts you, but until then you have no right to abandon your present work, and, if you did forsake it, you would find nothing but disappointment and suffering."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHETHER it was the effect of the medicine or of the conversation and advice, it is impossible to say, but Julius was soon restored to his normal state of health again, and all his former views of Christianity seemed to him but as the ravings of a madman.

The physician after a short sojourn left the city; and a few days after his departure Julius was on his feet again, busy following his advice and inaugurating the new life he had outlined for him. He engaged a teacher for his children, but he reserved to himself the chief control of their education; all the rest of his time he employed in the

conduct of public affairs, in which his success was marked and rapid, and in a very short space of time he had acquired immense influence in the city.

In this way a twelvemonth passed away, during which he was never once troubled by thoughts about the Christians. At the end of the year he was appointed to judge the Christians in their town, which was not very far off.

A representative of the Roman emperor had come to Celicia for the purpose of stamping out Christianity. Julius had heard of the measures put in force against the Christians, but, not supposing that they concerned the community in which Pamphilius lived, he never thought of his friend in connection with the matter. One day, as he was walking across the public square on his way to his tribunal, a shabbily

dressed old man, to all appearance a stranger, came hurrying up towards him. This badly dressed man was Pamphilius. Pamphilius drew near and accosted him. "How are you, friend," he said; "I have a very urgent and important request to make, but I do not know whether, during this cruel persecution of the Christians, you care to look upon me as a friend, or whether you are afraid to lose your position by having dealings with me."

"I fear no man," answered Julius, "and that you may have no misgivings on the subject, I would ask you to come along with me to my house. I will even let my work stand over, in order to have a chat with you and to render you any service in my power. Come along. Whose child is that?"

"That's my son."

"But I need not have inquired. I recognise your traits in his face. I also recognise those blue eyes of his, and deem it superfluous to ask who is your wife. It cannot be any one but that beautiful girl whom I saw with you in Tarsus many years ago. Those are her eyes."

"Your guess is correct," answered Pamphilius. "Shortly after you and I last parted, she became my wife."

The two friends entered Julius' house. Julius called his wife, confided the boy to her care, then ushered in Pamphilius to his own luxurious apartment, which was at a considerable distance from the other rooms, remarking as they entered: "Here you can talk to your heart's content, and nobody will ever be the wiser. You are out of the hearing of all the world."

"Oh, it is not afraid of being overheard

I am. Quite the reverse. Indeed, the request I have to make is not that the Christians who have been arrested and marked out for death should not be executed, but that permission should be accorded them to make a public profession of their faith."

And Pamphilius narrated how the Christians who had been deprived of their liberty by the authorities had sent word of their arrest from the prisons in which they were confined to the members of their community. Then Cyril, the Elder, aware of Pamphilius' friendly relations with Julius, had commissioned him to come and make that request for the condemned Christians.

The prisoners did not ask to be pardoned. They held it to be their mission in life to bear witness to the truth of Christ's teachings. This testimony they

could give by a long eighty years' life, or by undergoing the pains of a cruel death. It was quite immaterial to them in which of these two ways they fulfilled the main object of their existence ; physical death, which in the long run was inevitable, had no terrors for them, and it was quite as welcome now as fifty years hence ; but they were vehemently desirous that their lives should prove beneficial to their fellows, and to make sure of this, deputed Pamphilius to ask as a boon that their trial and execution should take place in the presence of the people.

Julius was astonished at Pamphilius' strange request, but promised to do everything that depended on him to have it granted.

"I have promised you my mediation," Julius said, "from a feeling of friendship

for yourself, and from a peculiar disposition to kindliness which you always succeed in awakening within me. At the same time, I feel I ought to tell you that I consider your tenets in the last degree extravagant and mischievous. I have a right, I think, to form a judgment upon the subject, seeing that I speak from experience. It is not long since I myself, in a moment of utter dejection brought on by disappointment and disease, shared your views; and shared them so fully that I was again on the point of giving up everything and joining your sect. I know the pivot on which all your errors turn, the corner-stone of the whole system, for I have myself passed through it; it is self-love, faint-heartedness and debility caused by disease. Yes, Christianity is a creed for women, not for men."

"But why so?"

"Because, although, on the one hand, you acknowledge that discord and the numerous forms of violence it engenders are inborn in human nature; you refuse, on the other hand, to hold aloof from these and their fruits, and to abandon them to others who are of a different way of thinking; and thus, without contributing your share to the sum of human efforts, you are not above reaping all the advantages you can have from the organisation of the world, which you know to be founded on violence. Is this fair? The world has always existed through and by means of its rulers. They take upon themselves the work and the responsibility of governing; they protect us from foreign and domestic enemies. We subjects, in return for this, pay our rulers deference

and homage, obey their commands, and, when needful, assist them to serve the State. But you Christians, instead of putting your shoulders to the wheel, and working for the common good as others do, and so rising gradually higher and higher in the obligation to treat others as your superiors, seem to be able to consider yourselves Cæsar's equals. Not satisfied with this, you protest against tributes and taxes, slavery, the law courts, executions, and war—in a word, against all those institutions which bind men together and keep them united. If people were to give ear to your doctrines, society would very quickly fall to pieces, and its members return to their pristine savagery. Living in a State, you preach the destruction of the State—you, whose very existence is dependent on that of the State. If the

State did not exist, you and your brethren would never have been heard of; we should all be slaves of the Scyths or of the first savage tribes who discovered us.

"You are like a tumour which destroys the body and yet lives solely upon the body. The living individual body struggles with and annihilates the tumour, and we act and cannot but act in precisely the same way towards you. Hence, in spite of my promise to assist you to realise your wishes, I look upon your tenets as exceedingly pernicious and vile. Vile, because I hold that to gnaw the breast that nourishes you is neither honourable nor just, and this is what you are doing who are willing to profit by the advantages offered by the commonwealth and yet refuse to move a finger in support of the

organisation by which it exists, and actually endeavour to pull it to pieces."

"There would be much truth in what you advance," replied Pamphilius, "if our life corresponded to your description of it. But you have no actual experience of the life we lead, and your notions of it are false and misleading.

"The means of livelihood which we make use of are readily obtainable without recurring to any form of violence whatever; and man is so constituted that so long as he is in normal health he can obtain by the work of his hands more than he requires for the support of his life. Living together in common we are able by the work of our hands to maintain our children and old folks, our sick and infirm.

"You assert that your rulers protect men from their foreign and domestic

enemies. But we love our enemies, and consequently have none.

"You contend that we Christians arouse in the breast of the slave a desire to be Cæsar. In truth we do to the contrary; by word and deed we preach patient humility and work—work of what is considered the lowest kind—the work of the common day labourer.

"About affairs of State we know nothing, understand nothing. We know but one thing in that sphere, but that we know thoroughly, beyond the possibility of doubt—namely, that our happiness lies there where the happiness of other people is to be found, and it is there that we always seek it. The happiness of all men consists in their union, and their union must be brought about, not by violence, but by love. The violence of a highway-

man towards a wayfarer is, to our thinking, neither more nor less abominable than the violence employed by troops against their prisoner, or by the judge against the condemned culprit, and it is impossible that we should deliberately consent to have hand or part in one or the other. Violence is reflected in us, but our share in it consists not in actively applying it to others, but in submitting to it without protest."

"Yes," interrupted Julius, "but you only seem to be martyrs and to be ever eager to lay down your lives for the truth. In reality truth is not on your side; you are proud madcaps, engaged in sapping the foundations of social life. In words you preach love, but it needs no very searching analysis of the results that flow from that love of yours to discover that it should be

called by a very different name; for the results in question are savagery, retrogression to the primitive state of nature, murders, robbery, violence of all kinds, &c., which, according to your doctrines, must not be opposed or checked in any way."

"No; that is not so," rejoined Pamphilius; "and if you will only consider carefully and impartially what results from our teaching and our living you will see, without my pointing it out, not only that murders, violence, and robbery do not flow from them, but that, on the contrary, crimes of this nature cannot be successfully rooted out otherwise than by employing the means we advocate. Murder, robbery, and every kind of evil existed in the world long before Christianity appeared there, and people grappled with them in vain, employing those very means the

efficacy of which we deny. These expedients, which all consist in meeting violence with violence, do not, cannot check crime, but they provoke it by arousing in individuals feelings of anger and bitterness.

"Just look at the mighty Roman Empire. In no other country have such pains been taken to apply the laws as in Rome. The study and delicate adjustment of the legislation to the varying wants of the people have been raised to the rank of a special science there. The laws are taught in the schools, discussed in the Senate, reformed and administered by the most gifted citizens. Legal justice is regarded as one of the noblest human achievements, and the office of judge is held in the highest esteem. And yet it is known to every one that there is no city existing at the present moment

throughout the length and breadth of God's earth which has sunk so deeply in the ooze of debauchery and crime as Rome. Call to mind the history of Rome, and you will be struck by the fact that the Roman people were distinguished by many virtues in remoter times, notwithstanding the circumstance that the laws then were neither so numerous nor drawn up with such a careful eye to the end in view as at the present time. Nowadays, side by side with the study, adjustment, and application of the laws, we observe a steady deterioration in the morals of the Roman people, the number of crimes continues to increase, and the species of criminal offences grow more various and artificial every day.

"To grapple successfully with crimes, or with any description of evil, is possible only by employing the means which Christianity

place within our reach—viz., love; the Pagan weapons of vengeance, punishment, violence are absurdly inefficacious. I am sure that you yourself would like to see people refraining from doing evil, not from fear of punishment, but from a lack of desire to do what is wrong. Surely you would not wish mankind to resemble the wretches confined in prison, who abstain from committing crime only because they are continually watched and kept in order by their gaolers. All the preventive and remedial laws and punishments in the world will not root out people's propensities to do wrong and put a desire to do right in its place. The result can be accomplished only when you deal with the root of the evil which you seek to eradicate; and the root lies inside the individual. And to do this is our aim and object,

whereas you confine yourself to the outward manifestations of the evil. You can never hope to reach its source, because you do not seek for it; you do not know where it is hidden.

"The most common and prevalent crimes, such as murder, robbery, theft, fraud, have their source in men's desire to increase their stock of this world's goods, or simply to obtain the bare necessities of life, which for one reason or another they cannot procure in any other way. Some of these crimes are punished by the law, although those which are the most complicated and wide-reaching in their effects are committed under the protecting wing of this same law —such, for instance, as huge commercial frauds, and the endless ways of stripping the poor of their possessions which are constantly practised by the rich. Those crimes

which are punished by the law are to a certain extent checked, or rather made more difficult, and the criminals are driven, by fear of incurring the penalty, to set to work more prudently and cunningly than would be otherwise necessary, devising new forms of crime which the laws cannot punish. By practising the teachings of the Christian religion a man keeps clear of all such crimes as arise either from the scramble for riches or from the unequal distribution of wealth, great quantities of which are accumulated in the hands of a few. We take away all motive for crime, for robbery and murder, solely by refusing to take for ourselves more than what is strictly indispensable for the support of life, and by giving up to others all our free labour; thus it is that we never tempt others by the sight of accumulated wealth, for we rarely possess more than is

absolutely necessary for our day's support. Hence, if a man who is driven to despair by the pains of hunger, and is ready to commit a crime in order to procure a crust of bread, comes to us, he will find what he is in search of, without having recourse to crime or violence, inasmuch as we live for the purpose of sharing our last morsel of food, our last shred of clothes, with those who are suffering from hunger and cold. And the result is that one class of criminals avoids us altogether, while the others come over to us, find salvation, abandon their criminal life, and little by little become useful workers, toiling like the others for the common good of all mankind.

"Another category of crime consists of those offences which are provoked by the play of unbridled passions—of vengeance,

for instance, jealous, carnal love, anger. hatred. Criminal acts of this species are never prevented by laws. The individual about to commit them is in a state of animal irresponsibility, perfect freedom from all moral restraints; and thus blinded and swayed by his passion, he is utterly incapable of gauging the effects or weighing the results of his actions. An obstacle only serves to fan the flame of his passion. Laws, therefore, are perfectly useless as instruments for suppressing such crimes. Our method of meeting them is efficacious. We believe that man will never attain the satisfaction and the aim of life by ministering to his passions, or anywhere except within himself, in his own soul. We endeavour, therefore, to tame and curb our passions by a life of labour and of love, developing thereby in a corresponding degree the force

and suppleness of the spiritual principle within us; and in proportion as our number becomes larger, and our faith penetrates farther and deeper among men, will the number of such crimes become less.

"Finally, there is still another class of crimes which have their root in a sincere desire to help one's fellow-creatures. The desire to alleviate the sufferings of an entire people, for instance, impels some men—conspirators, they are called—to kill a tyrant, in the belief that they are thereby benefiting the majority. The source of such crimes is a mistaken conviction that evil may be perpetrated, in order that good may follow. Now, crimes of this description are not only not prevented or their number lessened by the promulgation and application of legal pains and penalties, but they are positively provoked thereby. The

persons who commit offences of this kind, although grievously mistaken in their hopes and beliefs, are impelled to act as they do by a noble motive—a desire to do good to others. Most of these men, if sincere, are ready to lay down all they have and are for the attainment of their end, and they quail before no dangers or difficulties. Hence, fear of punishment is powerless to restrain or cause them to hesitate. On the contrary, dangers infuse new life and spirit into them, their sufferings raise them to the dignity of martyrs, earn for them the sympathy of most men and stimulate many others to go and do likewise. This is confirmed by the history of any, of every people.

"We Christians believe that the evil will not cease entirely until all men get to understand the gravity of the misfortunes

it causes to themselves and to others. We also know that a brotherhood cannot be founded until every one of us is himself a brother; that a brotherhood cannot be organised without brethren. Therefore we Christians, although we clearly perceive the error of such conspirators, cannot but appreciate their sincerity and self-denial, and we draw near them and meet them on the common ground of the positive good which it must be admitted they possess.

"In us they recognise not foes, but people quite as sincere and as eagerly bent on doing good as they are themselves, and many of them come over to us, after having acquired the conviction that a quiet life of toil and unceasing solicitude for the welfare of others is incomparably more beneficial to mankind and a more difficult achievement than their momentary feats of

prowess which are stained by the blood of human life needlessly sacrificed. And those conspirators who in this belief join our body, are always found among the most active and vigorous members of our community, both in body and in spirit.

"You have now data enough, Julius, to decide for yourself who it is that grapples more successfully with all kinds of crime and contributes more efficaciously to suppress it—we Christians, who preach and demonstrate the joy and delight of a spiritual life, from which no evil can arise—we whose aims are example and love; or your rulers and judges, who pass sentences according to the letter of a dead law, and finish by rescuing their victims or lashing them into fury and driving them to the uttermost extreme of hatred."

"As long as I keep listening to you,"

replied Julius, "I certainly seem to get the impression that your point of view is the correct one. But will you explain to me, Pamphilius, how it is that peòple persecute you, hunt you down, kill you? How, in a word, your doctrine of love can beget such discord and strife?"

"The source of this seeming anomaly is not in us, it is outside us. I alluded a few moments ago to a class of crimes which are condemned as crimes both by the State and by us. These crimes consist of a form of violence which transgresses the laws established for the time being in any State. But besides and above these laws, people recognise other laws which are eternal, common to all mankind, engraved in the hearts of all human beings. We Christians obey these divine universal laws, and discern in the words and life of

our teacher their fittest, clearest, and fullest expression. This is why we have come to condemn as a crime every form of violence which transgresses any one of Christ's commandments, in all of which we see the expression of God's law. We admit that in order to remove, when possible, all pretext for the manifestation of ill-will against us, we are bound to observe the civil laws of the country in which we reside. But higher than all else we place the law of God, which guides our conscience and our reason, and we can therefore obey only such laws of the State as are not opposed to those of God. Let Cæsar have what is his of right; but to God we must render all that is God's. The crimes which we are intent on avoiding and suppressing are not merely transgressions against the laws of the States in which we were born and

must live, but first and foremost every species of violation of God's will which is a law common to the whole human race. Hence our struggle with crime is more comprehensive and more profound than yours, which is carried on by the State.

"How this recognition by us of God's will as the highest law, shocks and incenses those who give the first place to a private law—to the legislative measures of a State, for instance, or, as is often the case, who raise a custom of their class to the dignity of a law. These individuals, unwilling or unable to become men in the true sense of the word, in the sense in which Christ said that truth would make us free men, are satisfied with the position of subjects of this or that State or members of this or that society, and they are naturally animated by feelings of enmity for those who

see and proclaim that man has a much higher destiny, a far nobler mission. Unable to discern, reluctant to admit, this higher destiny for themselves, they refuse to acknowledge it for others. Concerning them Christ said: 'Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in you hindered.' They are the originators of that persecution against us which puzzles you.

"We ourselves entertain feelings of enmity for no man—not even for those who thus pursue and persecute us, and our manner of life inflicts no harm or loss on any one. If people are incensed against us, if they foster feelings of hatred towards us, the only possible reason is that our life is a constant rebuke to them, a condemnation

of their conduct, founded as it is upon violence. To put an end to that enmity, the cause of which does not lie with us, is beyond our power, for we cannot cease to comprehend the truth which we have already comprehended, we cannot live against our conscience and our reason. Concerning that same hostility to us, which our faith arouses in others, our teacher said: 'Think not that I am come to bring peace; I came not to send peace, but a sword.' Christ felt the effects of this hatred on his own person, and he warned us, his followers, many times, that we too should experience it. 'Me,' he said once, 'the world hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the

world, therefore the world hateth you; and time will come when he who kills you will think that he doeth God service.' But, strengthened by Christ's example, we, like him, do not fear those that kill the body, for they can do nothing more. Illumined by the rays of truth, we live in its light, and our life knows not death. Physical suffering and death no man can escape. A time will come when our executioners will also suffer in body and die, and it is horrible to think how the unfortunate, helpless creatures will be tortured at the sight of death, which will strip them of all that they acquired at the cost of such arduous labour continued throughout their lifetime. Thanks to God that we are guaranteed against the most frightful of all suffering; for the happiness for which we yearn consists not in immunity from bodily pain and death, but

in the preservation and development of equanimity in all the vicissitudes of life ; in the consoling conviction that whatever happens to us independently of our own will, is unavoidable, and for our ultimate good ; and, above all, in the knowledge that we are true to our conscience and our reason—those noble lights bestowed upon man by the source of truth. And thus we suffer nothing from those who hate and persecute us. It is not we, but they, who smart from the stings of that enmity, that hatred which, like a snake in their bosom, they nurture in their hearts. 'And this is their condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' There is nothing to perplex or trouble us in all that ; for truth will do its work. The sheep hear the voice of their shepherd, and

they follow him, because they know his voice.

"And Christ's flock will not perish, but will grow and thrive, attracting ever new sheep from all parts of the world; for the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE he was still speaking, Pamphilius' little son rushed into the apartment, and hugged and clasped his father. In spite of all the coaxing and caresses he had run away from Julius' wife, and now took shelter in his father's embrace.

Pamphilius sighed, fondled his boy, rose up and was about to depart; but Julius detained him, requested him to continue the conversation and stay for dinner.

"I am astonished, I confess," said Julius, "that you should be married and have children. It is a mystery to me how you Christians can bring up your children, in

spite of the absence of property; how Christian mothers can attain peace of mind, knowing, as they do, how precarious is the future of their offspring, and how powerless they are to put their children beyond the reach of want."

"In what respect are our children worse off than yours?" asked Pamphilius.

"In this respect, that they have no slaves to look after them, no property of any kind to fall back upon. My wife is very favourably disposed to Christianity, in fact, at one time, she was firmly bent on abandoning her present life and becoming a Christian. That was several years ago —I, too, was then resolved to accompany her. But what frightened her more than anything else was the precariousness of the position of Christian children, the want to which they are exposed. And I must say,

I could not but agree with her. That was when I was ill and confined to my bed. I was then thoroughly disgusted with the life I had been leading, and had taken the resolution to forsake it once for all and join your community. But the apprehensions of my wife on the one hand, and the arguments of the physician who attended me and brought me round on the other hand, impressed me with the conviction that the life of a Christian—at least as you understand and practise it—is possible and beneficial only when those who embrace it are unmarried; but that persons with families, mothers with children, are utterly unsuited for it and should never think of trying it. Furthermore, that the upshot of the life you approve and lead, will be the cessation of all human life—that is to say, the extinction of the race. This is a fact which there

is no getting over. And under such circumstances, I was, I confess, rather surprised to see you appear with a child by your side."

"And not one only, I may add; for I left at home a child in arms and a girl of three years."

"Well, will you explain how it is done? Do what I will, I positively cannot understand it. A few years ago I was, as I remarked, on the point of forswearing my worldly life, and embracing Christianity. But I was the father of children, and I felt that, however distasteful the fact might be to me, it still remained a fact that I had no right to sacrifice my children; and, recognising this, I stayed on leading my old life for their sakes, in order to bring them up in the same conditions as those in which I was educated myself."

"It is very odd," said Pamphilius, "that you should reason so. From the same facts we draw opposite conclusions. We say, if grown-up people live in a worldly manner, this is to a certain extent excusable, because they are spoiled already. But children? That is horrible! To live with them in the world, and expose them continually to its temptations and dangers! 'Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!' These are the words of our Master; and I make use of them for that reason, and because they are the expression of the truth, and not merely for the purpose of objecting; for it is really a fact that the necessity of living as we live results mainly from the circumstances that there are children in our midst, tender beings of whom

it has been said: 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

"But how can a Christian family contrive to get along without definite means of subsistence?"

"Means of subsistence, according to our belief, are of one kind, and only one kind: work for the benefit of others inspired by love. Your means of livelihood, on the contrary, are violence, which can vanish as wealth vanishes, and then nothing remains but the labour and love of men. We start with the idea that we should hold fast by that which is the foundation—the basis of everything else—increasing it when possible. And when this is done, the family lives, and even thrives. No," continued Pamphilius, "if I entertained any doubts about the truth of Christ's teaching, and if I hesi-

tated about putting them into practice, my doubts and hesitations would instantly disappear the moment I pictured to myself the sad fate of the children who are brought up in Paganism, amid the surroundings and associations in which you grew up and are now educating your children. No matter what strenuous efforts we, a small band of individuals, make to render life comfortable and pleasant by means of palaces, slaves, and the imported products of foreign climes, the lives of the great mass of the people will remain what they were, what they must be. The only provision for these lives remains the love of mankind and earnest toil. We are desirous of freeing ourselves and our friends from the pressure of these conditions, and we get other people to work for us, not voluntarily, out of love, but by employing violence; and, strange to

say, the better we seem to provide for ourselves, the more we are depriving ourselves of the only true, natural, and enduring provision—love. The greater the power of the ruler, the less he is loved. The same thing holds good of that other provision—work. The more a man shirks work, and accustoms himself to luxury, the less capable he becomes of working, and the more he consequently deprives himself of the true and eternal provision. And these conditions in which people place their children they term making provision for them! To test my statement, take your son and mine, and send them to find a road, to transmit an order, or to transact any important business, and note which of them acquits himself more satisfactorily; or propose to confide them to a master to be educated, and see which of them will be

the more willingly received. No, never again utter those terrible words that a Christian life is possible only for those who are childless. On the contrary, one might rather say that to lead the life of a Pagan is excusable only in those who are without children. But woe to him who offendeth any of these little ones."

Julius remained silent.

"Yes," he said, after a considerable pause, "it may be that you are right; but their education is already begun, the very best masters are teaching them. Let them learn all that we know; that can surely do them no harm. There is plenty of time yet, both for them and for me. They will be at liberty to embrace your faith, when they are in the flower of their age and in the full enjoyment of all their faculties—if they feel so disposed. As for me, I can

do so when I have provided for my children, set them standing on their own feet, so to say, and have thus become free."

"When you have known the truth, you will be free," answered Pamphilius. "Christ confers perfect liberty at once: the world's teaching will never bestow it. Good-bye."

And Pamphilius, with his son, departed.

The trial of the prisoners took place in the presence of the people, and Julius saw Pamphilius and noticed how he, along with the other Christians, assisted in removing the bodies of the martyrs. He noticed that, but fear of offending his superiors kept him from approaching his friend or inviting him to his house.

CHAPTER X.

TWELVE years more passed away. Julius' wife died. His time was filled up with the cares and worry inseparable from public life, and in the pursuit of power which now became his for a passing moment, and now slipped away from his grasp. His wealth was immense, and he still went on increasing it.

His sons had meanwhile grown to man's estate, and were leading—especially the second one—a life of luxury and extravagance. This young man had made considerable holes in the vessel in which his father's riches were stored up, and they leaked out

with greater rapidity than they were poured in. A struggle was carried on between Julius and his sons, which was in all respects identical with that which had been waged years before by himself and his father. It was characterised by the same traits: bitterness, jealousy, hatred. Moreover, about this time a new viceroy had been appointed, who deprived Julius of all the marks of Imperial favour. Julius was forsaken in consequence by his former flatterers, and was now in expectation of being banished. He repaired to Rome in order to offer explanations with a view to recover his lost position, but he was not received, and was commanded to return home.

On his arrival in Tarsus he found his son banqueting with several dissolute young men in his house. In Cilicia a rumour had been circulated to the effect

that Julius was dead, and his son was joyfully celebrating his father's death. At sight of this Julius, losing all control over his passion, felled his son to the ground, left him for dead, and withdrew to the apartment of his late wife. In his wife's room he found a scroll containing the Gospel, and read therein the words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Yes," exclaimed Julius to himself, "He has been long calling me. I did not believe Him; was disobedient and wicked, and the yoke I bore was heavy, the burden I carried was evil."

And for a long time Julius remained sitting with the manuscript spread out before him on his knees, meditating upon his past life, and calling to mind what Pamphilius on various occasions had told him.

At length he arose and went to his son, whom he found on his feet, and he was overjoyed to think that he had inflicted no serious harm by the blow.

Without addressing a word to his son Julius left the house, walked into the street, and took the road that led to the Christian community.

He journeyed on the whole day, and when evening came he stopped at a villager's house, where he intended to pass the night. In the room into which he entered there was a man stretched out on a couch. The noise of footsteps disturbed him, and he raised himself up.

Julius recognised the physician.

"No," exclaimed Julius, "never again shall you dissuade me from carrying out my resolve. This is the third time that I am bound for the same destination, and I

know that there, and there only, I shall find peace of mind."

"Where?" asked the physician.

"Among the Christians."

"Yes; you may possibly find peace of mind there, but you will certainly not be doing your duty. You lack fortitude, my friend; misfortunes subdue you. True philosophers never act thus. Disasters and reverses are but the fire that tries the gold. You have passed through the crucible; and now that your services, which might prove inestimable, are most urgently needed, you are sneaking away. It is now that you should test others and yourself. You have acquired true wisdom, and it is your duty to make use of it for the good of the commonwealth. What would become of the citizens and the State if those who have obtained a thorough

knowledge of men, their passions, motives, and the conditions of their life, instead of giving the benefit of their knowledge and experience to the State, were to bury them out of sight and seek repose and tranquillity for themselves? Your wisdom has been gained in society, and it is your duty to allow society to reap the benefits of it."

"But I possess no wisdom. I am a bundle of errors. True, they are ancient, but then antiquity does not transform errors into wisdom; age and putridity, no matter what proportions they may reach, never change water into wine."

And having said this, Julius caught up his mantle, quitted the room and the house, and without resting anywhere continued his journey.

The next evening, as the long shadows

had just deepened into darkness, he reached the town of the Christians. He received a very cordial welcome, notwithstanding that it was not known that he was the personal friend of Pamphilius, whom they all loved and revered.

At table Pamphilius perceived his friend, and with an affable smile ran up to him and pressed him in his embrace.

"Here I am at last," exclaimed Julius. "Tell me what I am to do; I will obey you."

"Don't worry about that," replied Pamphilius; "let us go together." And Pamphilius led Julius into the house that was prepared for strangers and wayfarers, pointed to the couch there, and said: "You will find out yourself in what way you may be useful to others, as soon as you have looked around you and grown accustomed

to our mode of life. But in order that you may make a profitable use of your present leisure, I will tell you what you might do to-morrow; in our gardens the brethren are busy gathering in the vintage; go and give them what assistance you can. You will easily find your place among them."

Julius went to the vineyards next morning. The first was a young plantation with rich clusters of grapes hanging down on every side. The young people were gathering them in and carrying them away. All the work was portioned out among them, and Julius went from one to another anxious to discover something to do, but he found no place for himself there.

He penetrated further, and came into a somewhat older plantation, where the crop

was considerably less. But here, too, he failed to get an occupation; the brethren were busy working in pairs, and required no additional hands. He continued his search, however, and soon found himself in a very old vineyard. It was empty. The vine-stocks were warped and crooked, and, as it seemed to Julius, wholly devoid of fruit.

"So this is what my life is," he exclaimed to himself, as he looked around. "Had I come hither at the first call, my life would have been as the fruits of the first vineyard. Had I come at the second call, it would have been like those of the older plantation; but now my life is as these useless, weakly old vine-stocks, fit only to be thrown into the fire."

And Julius was terrified at what he had done, at the thought of the punishment

that awaited him for having wantonly squandered his whole life.

And he became very sad, and said aloud: "I am now fit for nothing; there is now no work that I can do." And he did not rise up from his place, but wept bitterly over the criminal loss of that which he knew he could never more bring back.

Suddenly he heard the voice of an old man calling out to him. "Work, dear brother," said the voice.

Looking round, Julius beheld a very old man with snow-white hair, doubled up with age, whose tottering feet scarcely bore up the weight of his body. He stood beside a vine, and was gathering the rare sweet grapes that grew here and there upon it. Julius went up to him.

"Work, dear brother," he said; "work is sweet." And he taught him how to

look for the very few clusters that were still on the stalks.

Julius set to work to do as he had been told, and having found some bunches of grapes, took them to the old man and put them in his basket.

And the old man said to him, "Look! In what are these bunches inferior to those they are gathering in the other plantations? Work while ye have the light, said our Teacher. It is the will of Him that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son and believeth in Him, has life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day. For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him will not be judged, and he who does not believe is judged already, because he did not believe in the

only begotten Son of God. The judgment consists in this, that the light came into the world, but men loved darkness better than the light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

"You are disheartened and downcast, because you have not done more than you have actually accomplished. Do not grieve, my son, for we are all children of God, and His servants. We are all soldiers of His army. Do you think that He has no servants but yourself? And suppose you had devoted yourself to His service in the vigour of your strength, do you imagine that you would have accom-

plished all that He required, that you would have done for your fellow-men all that is necessary, in order to bring about His kingdom upon earth? You say that you would have accomplished twice as much as you can now perform, ten times as much, a hundred times as much. If you realised a myriad times more than all mankind combined, what would all this amount to in the work of God? To nothing. The work of God, like God himself, has no limits, no end. God's work is within you. Approach it, and become not a workman, but a son, and you will be a co-partner of God, who is infinite, and a sharer in His work. With God there is neither little nor great; and in life there is neither little nor great; there is only straight or crooked. Enter on the straight road in life, and you

will be with God, and your work will be neither great nor little; it will be God's work. Remember that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons. The world's ways, and all that you have neglected to do, have shown you your sin. And having seen your sin, you have repented. And having repented, you have found the right road. And now that you are on the right road, go forwards with God, think no more of the past, of little and of great. All living men are equal before God. There is one God and one life."

And Julius grew calm and composed again—obtaining the peace of mind he had yearned for, and he manfully set himself to live and to work to the utmost of his power

for the good of his fellow-men. And he lived thus joyfully twenty years, his soul too full to allow him to perceive the slow approach of physical death.

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